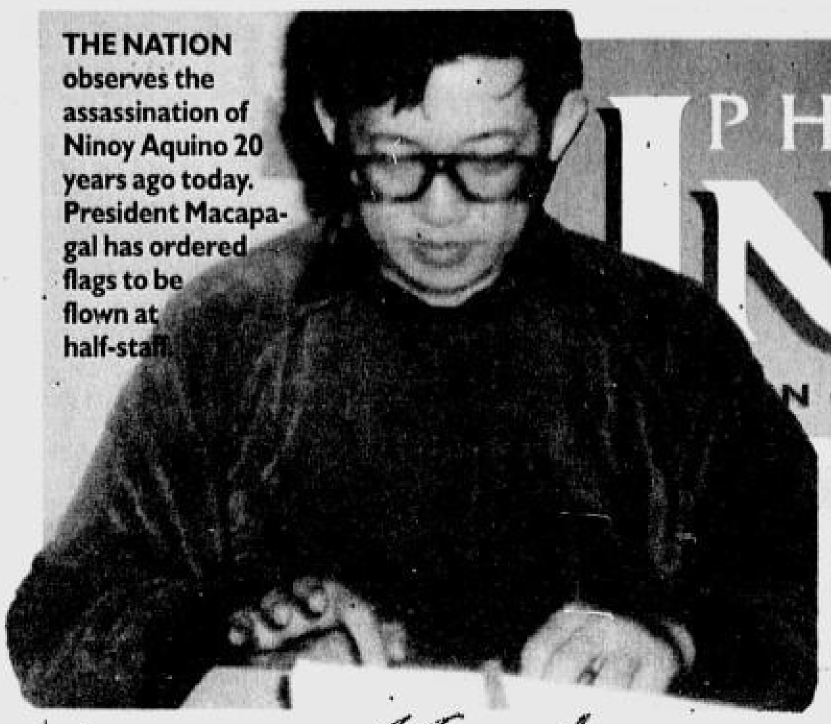
2 Pinoy UN workers die in Baghdad suicide bombing

Story below, Col. 2

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
NCE.D NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, August 21, 2003 ★★ 48 pages / 5 sections / vol. 18 / no. 254 P15 website: www.inq7.net



THE NATION observes the assassination of Ninoy Aquino 20 years ago today. President Macapagal has ordered flags to be flown at half-staff.

New docs: 13 in top 10

MANABAT: Second place

THE PROFESSIONAL Regulation Commission announced that 1,350 out of 2,430 passed the physician licensure examination given by the Board of Medicine this month in Manila and Cebu.

For the full list, see NEW/ A18

The last time I saw Ninoy

By Corazon C. Aquino

THROUGHOUT our three years and three months in the United States, Ninoy and I were always aware that our life there was temporary. Ninoy never stopped talking about returning to the Philippines even as we enjoyed living together as a family in the land of the free.

In the first quarter of 1983, Ninoy was receiving information about the deteriorating political situation in our country combined with the rumored poor health of the dictator. Ninoy believed that it was imperative for him to speak to Marcos so that he could appeal to him to return our country to democracy, before extreme forces were released that would make such a return impossible.

I told Ninoy: "What makes you think that Marcos will want to talk to you or even listen to you?" And he said: "I will never be able to forgive myself if I did not at least try."

Hearing Ninoy say that, I knew there was nothing I could do to stop him from returning. Not even after we were warned about the threats on his life. The tiniest hope that there could be a peaceful and painless restoration of democracy was enough to convince Ninoy he had to try it. For him, the important consideration was that the solution did not involve more of the pain and suffering that the original problem spawned.

While it is true that Ninoy's own sufferings had convinced him of the inexhaustible capacity of man to endure pain, still he did not want anyone else to go

THE LAST/ A18

My dearest Cory,

(The following are parts of Ninoy's last letter to Cory - Ed)

In a few hours I shall be embarking on an uncertain fate, which may well be the end of a long struggle. I slept well last night for the first time since I left Boston—maybe because I'm just plain tired or I'm really at peace with myself. I want to tell you many things but time is running out and I do not have my machine. After a few more paragraphs, my penmanship will be illegible.

All the things I want to tell you may be capsulized in one line—I love you! You've stood by me in my most trying moments and there were times I was very hard on you. But if anyone will ever understand me, it is you, and I know you will always find it in your heart to forgive—and unfair and ironic as it is—it is because of this thought and belief that I often took you for granted.

Early on I knew I was not meant to make money—so I won't be able to leave anything to the children. I did what I thought I could do best, which is public service, and I hope our people in time will appreciate my sacrifices. This would be my legacy to the children. I may not bequeath them material wealth but I leave them a tradition which can be priceless.

I realize I've been very stingy with my praise and appreciation for all your efforts—but though unsaid—you know that as far as I'm concerned, you are the best. That's why we've lasted this long. There will only be one thing in the world I will never accept—that you love me more than I love you—because my love though unarticulated for you will never be equaled.

If all goes well I should be back in my cell before sundown. Should I be detained do not rush to get home. Take your time and enjoy a side trip to Europe with the girls.

I'll try to call you tonight if the authorities will allow me. Otherwise just remember me in your dreams.

Love,
Ninoy

P.S. I offered a special rosary for Papa and I asked for his intercession. You know he never failed me. (Ninoy here is referring to my father, Jose Cojuangco, who died on Aug. 21, 1976.—CCA)

Lowly paid millionaires

80% of BIR, DPWH and BOC execs have unexplained wealth

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

DESPITE public knowledge that certain departments and agencies of the government are riddled with corruption, the top man of the Malacañang-based Transparency Group said he was still amazed when he saw the figures.

More than 80 percent of officials in the Bureaus of Internal Revenue and of Customs and of the Department of Public Works and Highways are millionaires, according to Nick Conti (not Comti, as earlier reported), head of the group looking into the lifestyles of presidential appointees and public officials.

To cite some instances, he said, a customs collector in La Union had assets worth P96 million; an assistant BIR commissioner, P53.4 million; and a DPWH regional director, P43 million.

Only 15 of 78 BIR officials, from commissioner to directors, are non-millionaires. In the BOC, only three of 39 officials have net worths below P1 million. The same is true with the DPWH where only three of 48 regional directors are non-millionaires.

Conti expressed surprise at this result of his group's collation of bundles and bundles of Statements of Assets and Liabilities filed by top officials of the BOC, DPWH and BIR for 2002. (Cabinet secretaries make up a separate bunch also subject to lifestyle

LOWLY PAID/ A17

THE ACHIEVEMENTS of 20 groups are honored by Ninoy Aquino's widow, former President Aquino at the NBC Tent on Wednesday, "if only to prove that Ninoy did not die in vain," she said. In photo with Ms Aquino and Benigno Aquino III (2nd from right) are the awardees from Bahay Pangarap, a subsidiary of Tahanang Walang Hagdanan which was cited for providing livelihood training to the disabled. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Cory awards people who empower people

By Volt Contreras

ON THE occassion of the 20th anniversary of her husband's martyrdom, former President Cory Aquino yesterday launched the People Power People Movement, awarding citations to 20 organizations who she said used the spirit of Edsa 1986 to "bring health, livelihood, education, housing, and hope" to the Filipino people.

The widow of the murdered Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., said she wants to trumpet the achievements of the honories "if only to prove that Ninoy did not die in vain."

The awardees, whom she dubbed the "People Power People of 2003," followed her husband's "path of sustained service to God

CORY/ A18

Graft charges filed vs 5 top gov't officials

By Armand N. Nocum and Martin P. Marfil

GRAFT charges were filed yesterday before the Ombudsman against five officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways and the Bureau of Customs, with investigators saying they had an "airtight" case against the respondents.

Investigators also denied that a "witch-hunt" was in progress. "It took us almost five months to investigate these cases. We wanted to make sure that innocent people will not be dragged into the issue of graft," said Assistant Secretary Nick Conti (not Comti, as earlier reported) of the Malacañang-based Transparency Group.

Those charged were Public Works Undersecretary Salvador A. Pleyto and Regional Director Romeo Panganiban; and Customs officials Gil A. Valera, Jaime P. Maglipon and Flor Aguilar.

Conti said the probe was done primarily by "veteran investigators" of the Office of the Ombuds

GRAFT/ A15

2 Filipinos killed in Baghdad bombing

By Juliet L. Javellana and TJ Burgonio

DESPITE the deadly bombing in Baghdad that killed two Filipinos, an 87-man Philippine contingent of peacekeepers last night left for Iraq to show that the country would not be intimidated by the terrorist attack, President Macapagal-Arroyo said.

Ms Macapagal joined world leaders in condemning the attack on the UN headquarters in Baghdad and offered her sympathies to the 20 people who were killed in what appeared to be a suicide bombing.

Among the fatalities were Filipinos Ranillo Buenaventura, 47, of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Marilyn Manuel, a staffer of UN

2 FILIPINOS/ A16

20 dead, 100 hurt in blast at UN offices

BAGHDAD—Many bodies are still buried in the rubble of the devastated UN headquarters in Baghdad after it was hit by a truck bomb that killed at least 20 people, Iraq's governing council said on Wednesday.

"There are 20 dead and there are many believed still trapped in there," Ahmad Chalabi, a council member, told reporters after the 25-member council held a meeting with L. Paul Bremer, the top

UN OFFICES/ A16

Who are Victoria and Thomas Toh?

By Alcuin Papa

WHO are Victoria and Thomas Toh and why are they now at the center of a storm?

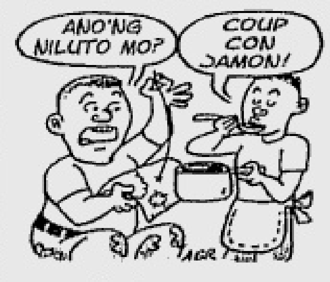
The siblings, whom Sen. Panfilo Lacson accused of acting as dummies for First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, are simple and quiet people, according to Gelacio Mamaril, lawyer for Thomas.

"They are really good in business. They are not ostentatious people. But they like to go abroad on trips," said Mamaril in an interview with reporters in his office in Makati.

Mamaril said Vicky was so lowkey that the lawyer had met her only three times, once at the family's hardware store on Kalentong Street in Mandaluying City and twice at the LTA Building on Perea Street in Makati.

"She is a quiet person who speaks only when spoken to. She is more of an employee and not too much into business because she is the treasurer of their busi-

WHO/ A18


ANO'NG NILUTO MO?
COUP CON JAMON!

Rebel Marines prefer stitching, cooking, singing

By Julie S. Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Ever wondered how the mutineers, particularly those belonging to the Marines, kill time in military stockades?

REBEL/ A15

A funeral like no other for Ninoy

By Sen. Tessie Aquino Oreta

(The author is the youngest sister of Ninoy Aquino-Ed.)

WHENEVER someone mentions Sir Richard Attenborough's epic film "Gandhi," I remember the day when Ninoy and I watched it in San Francisco, California, a few weeks before Aug. 21, 1983.

Ninoy left the theater misty-eyed, visibly moved by the film that espoused freedom through non-violent means, a concept which, three years later would see its rebirth in the Philippines and replication across the globe from the Soviet Union to Mainland China, sparked by Ninoy's assassination at the airport that now bears his name.

After seeing that movie, two decades ago, I made a promise to Ninoy that I had no idea I would have to fulfill only a few weeks later.

A FUNERAL/ A18

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2003
E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon will have occasional rains with occasional gusty winds with moderate to occasionally rough seas. The Western sections of Northern and Central Luzon will have occasional rains while the rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY: ARMIN ADINA, PDI RESEARCH/08/21/03 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly cloudy
Baguio	Occasional rains	Roxas	Partly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with rains	Cebu	Partly cloudy
Laoag	Rains with winds	Tacloban	Partly cloudy
Clark Zone	Occasional rains	Gen. Santos	Partly cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly cloudy
Legazpi	Partly cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly cloudy
Calapan	Partly cloudy	Davao	Partly cloudy

Officer tags Gringo as recruiter

By Cynthia D. Balana

A SCOUT Ranger officer who was accused by one of the rogue soldiers as having ordered the bombing of a mosque in Davao City yesterday said he had actually spoken to and met with the "Kuya" whom those plotting the July 27 failed coup intended to put at the head of the 15-man junta and that it was opposition Sen. Gregorio Honasan.

Maj. Glenn Paje, commander of the 4th Scout Rangers Batallion based in Camp Bautista in Sulu, told a House hearing yesterday that it was Army Capt. Milo Maestrecampo who had introduced him to Honasan.

Maestrecampo, one of the junior officers who led the siege of the Oakwood Premier hotel on July 27, had claimed that his battalion commander, later identified as Paje, had ordered him to bomb a mosque following the bombings of the Davao International Airport and the Sasa Wharf in Davao City last April.

Maestrecampo said he did not follow his battalion commander's order but that the next day, a mosque had indeed been bombed.

Paje, who was testifying at a House national defense committee hearing into the failed coup, denied having given such an order to Maestrecampo.

He said Maestrecampo implicated him because the latter tried but failed to recruit him into the group of coup plotters.

He said Maestrocampo had introduced him to the objectives of the National Recovery Program, a brainchild of Honasan, and offered to introduce him to the "Kuya."

He said that sometime in February, Maestrocampo had dialed a number on his mobile phone and handed it to him so he could hear what "Kuya," whom he identified as Senator Honasan, had to say.

Paje told the committee that the man on the phone identified himself as "Senator Honasan."

"He asked me how I was. Then he said there was no problem with my battalion. We simply talked about the problems of the country in passing for five minutes, more or less. The senator then invited me to come to Manila when I get the time so we could meet in person," he said.

Paje said that when he was in Manila on R & R sometime in March, Maestracampo arranged a meeting with Honasan.

He said he was picked up along C-5 at about 8:30 p.m. by three man led by a certain Captain Andres, who turned out to be one of the mutiny leaders. He said he knew the captain who was also with the Scout Rangers.

The van they were riding took a circuitous route in the direction of Mandaluyong and San Juan before stopping in front of a dimly lit house. He said there was no furniture in the house which he found unusual.

Inside the room was Honasan and about 15 other young men, including Captain Andres, who looked like military officers, Paje said. Meastrecampo was not in the group.

He said Honasan then invited him to sit down and talked about the problems of the country.

"Honasan insinuated that I could be a part of the solution to the problems of the country, but I told him that I'd think about it," he said.

On April 4, he was told by his men that Honasan had visited the nearby 16th Scout Rangers Company. He said nobody had been informed of Honasan's "unusual visit. He said it was highly suspicious for the senator to visit just one company without passing by the Scout Rangers battalion headquarters which was only a few miles away. Paje said he reported the matter to his regiment commander.

At one point, the five junior officers, by Lt. (s.g.) Antonio Trillanes, walked out of the hearing after Lt. (s.g.) James Layug was cut short by committee chair, Rep. Prospero Pichay while reading a joint statement from the group.

Pichay reminded the officers against using the hearing to criticize the Feliciano Commission and the Senate that are also looking into the failed coup.

The five were forced to return after several congressmen suggested that their lawyer, Homobono Adaza, be cited for contempt for allowing them to walk out.

Other enlisted personnel charged for involvement in the failed coup also invoked their right against self-incrimination.

But Army Sgt. Manolito Dagdag testified that he and 37 other soldiers belonging to the 1st Infantry Battalion based in Montalban were deceived by their commanding officer into going to the Glorietta mall on July 27.

Dagdag said they were taken to Glorietta. He said he only found out what was going on at Oakwood through the media. *With a report from Philip C. Tubeza*

Honasan dared: Take armpit test

INTERIOR Secretary Jose Lina yesterday challenged opposition Sen. Gregorio Honasan to undergo an "armpit test" to prove he is innocent of charges that he was involved in the July 27 failed coup.

Honasan should "present his left arm to the people" and stop hiding to quell speculations that he is undergoing plastic surgery to remove the scar on his upper left arm that he allegedly sustained in a blood compact ritual with the rogue soldiers, Lina said in an interview.

A government witness, Army Maj. Perfecto Ragil, claimed to have seen Honasan participating in the blood compact at a meeting of the alleged coup plotters on June 4 which he had attended.

He claimed that Honasan was in that meeting that ended with a blood compact ritual in which the plotters drew blood by carving the Tagalog letter "ka" resembling a capital "I" on the inner portion of their left arm.

Lina said there was no reason for Honasan to continue hiding since there was no warrant of arrest against him.

He said the continued "unavailability" of Honasan only strengthened the belief that he was guilty, citing a principle in criminal law that "flight is evidence of guilt."

Lina said the coup charges against Honasan was still with the justice department and that the senator would be given a chance to answer the charges. He said it would take time before the suit can be filed in court.

He said Honasan would not be arrested until after a court issues an arrest warrant.

Lina also denied that Honasan was being tried by publicity as it was Honasan himself who was "giving clandestine interviews and hitting the government left and right while we [government officials] remain silent."

He said Honasan could ask the Senate for security if he feared for his safety. He can even pick his own security personnel, he said.

Lina has said that three more still unnamed witnesses would testify and corroborate Ragil's claims concerning Honasan's role in the failed coup.

The interior secretary also dismissed the reported threats to his life, vowing that he would not be deterred from doing his job.

Earlier, Commodore Amado Sanglay, a Navy officer based in Camp San Felipe where most of the rebel soldiers are detained, told the INQUIRER that some members of the Magdalo group were out to kill Lina and National Security Adviser Roilo Golez for allegedly "spilling a litany of lies and fabricating charges against the Magdalo group" of soldiers that laid siege to the Oakwood Premier hotel at the Ayala Center on July 27. *Nelson Forte Flores*

Military dismisses fears of '2nd wave' of mutiny

By Christian V. Esguerra and TJ Burgonio

A RANKING police official yesterday said there was a brewing "second wave" of the July 27 failed coup but military officials brushed aside the revelations, claiming that all of the more than 300 mutineers had been accounted for except for an Army captain.

Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, the military information officer, said that speculations of a re-run of the failed coup were part of a disinformation campaign aimed at weakening the military.

"This is all part of an overall campaign to disinform the public. This is aimed at sowing confusion and intrigue within the military ranks... to weaken the morale of the troops," he told reporters.

Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya said people identified with opposition Sen. Gregorio Honasan have been recruiting police and military officers to join a planned uprising to follow the one that was staged at the Oakwood Premier hotel in Makati on July 27.

"We have been getting some reports lately that money is being offered. Some people are going around, offering cash to the families of those who will join the coup," Berroya told reporters.

Berroya said Sen. Panfilo Lacson's exposé accusing First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo of corruption was part of the "political component" of an alleged destabilization plot against the Macapagal administration.

Berroya said the recruitment was particularly massive in Mindanao and the Negros area. Each officer is said to to be getting offers of as much as P50,000.

Police intelligence officials are now investigating the alleged recruitment, particularly the source of the funds, he said.

A source from the intelligence community yesterday warned that a second mutiny might indeed be in the offing.

The uprising, the source claimed, might come late this month or early September.

Berroya said he was willing to go before the Feliciano Commission which is investigating the failed coup.

He suggested that retired Col. Billy Bibit, a fellow member of the Rebolusyunaryong Alyansang Makabansa, be also summoned since Bibit also knew of it.

Berroya said Honasan was allegedly heavily involved in the "second wave" mobilization which he said was similar to what the senator did after the failed coup of 1987.

"The disappearance of Senator Honasan was part of our strategy when after [the 1987 coup], we went into hiding and waited for the so-called second wave," he said.

The "second wave" came two years later, in December 1989.

Berroya was part of the 1987 and 1989 coups that Honasan led.

But he assured the public that the senator had yet to recruit a substantial number of officers to join the new mutiny.

Berroya alleged that more than a month before the Oakwood siege, Lacson offered to shell out P30 million during a meeting with Honasan and other coup plotters.

He said he was told about the meeting by a former RAM member who claimed to have been present when Lacson allegedly made the offer.

"Even Honasan himself was suprised" when Lacson offered the P30 million, Berroya said.

Honasan was later said to comment that Lacson seemed to have a lot of money.

Honasan reportedly did not tell the junior officers that he had recruited that Lacson was part of the plot as he was afraid the soldiers would "back out" as they all "hated" Lacson because of his alleged involvement in criminal activities.

Ninoy soon to join list of nat'l heroes

By Michael Lim Ubac

FORMER Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. will soon be joining the roster of the country's national heroes after the Senate unanimously approved on second reading Tuesday night a bill recognizing the heroism and martrydom of the slain senator.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., the principal sponsor of Senate Bill 2356, said the bill was effectively passed by the upper chamber. "The third reading will just be a formality since nobody is opposing it," Pimentel said.

Once signed into law, Aug. 21 of every year would henceforth be observed as a national holiday in honor of Aquino.

Pimentel hailed the swift passage of the bill, saying Aquino was a "hero and martyr to the cause of peace, freedom and democracy." He had said that Aquino should be hailed as a national hero alongside Dr. Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifaco and Sultan Kudarat for unselfishly giving up his life for the sake of restoring freedom in the country.

"Such a noble and heroic deed needs to be officially remembered and formally commemorated by the nation to inspire the people, especially the youth of the land, to uphold the values of peace, freedom and democracy which Ninoy had espoused and for which he had paid the supreme sacrifice," Pimentel said.

The bill was calendared for second reading just a day after it was sponsored by Pimentel on the Senate floor.

Senate deliberations on the bill were rushed in time for today's 20th anniversary of Aquino's death.

The Committee on constitutional amendments, revision of codes and laws circulated a committee report on Tuesday, and submitted it for plenary debate Monday.

The committee report pushed for the passage of the bill, titled "An Act declaring Aug. 21 of every year as the Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino national holiday and for other purposes."

Pimentel expects the bicameral conference committee to reconcile the separate versions of the Senate and the House this week.

Why not? says Imelda brother

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez Sr., the brother-in-law of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos, yesterday said that he supports moves in Congress to declare ex-Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. a national hero.

"He (Aquino) can even be placed along side (Dr. Jose) Rizal as our national hero," Romualdez said, adding that the slain senator had done "a lot to the country" and even sacrificed his own life.

The late senator was shot by a lone gunman as he descended the stairs of a China Airlines plane which carried him home after years of exile abroad. Until now, the mastermind of the killing is still unknown. But many believed that Marcos may have ordered the killing.

But the younger brother of former first lady Imelda Romualdez-Marcos cleared his brother-in-law of complicity in the assassination of Aquino 20 years ago.

"No, I don't think so. He cannot afford to do that. As far as I know, they were friends, not necessarily best of friends, but they were friends," Romualdez told the INQUIRER.

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Media party eases Palace tension

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

JOKES, laughter and singing marked the Tuesday night dinner to patch up a rift between President Macapagal-Arroyo and members of the Malacañang Press Corps.

Ms Macapagal, dressed simply in a blouse and slacks, was in a good mood and laughed heartily at the risque jokes of comedian Gary Lising who poked fun at her, members of the Cabinet and some of her predecessors.

But she was noticeably unamused when the jokes veered too closely to the issue bedeviling her husband, First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, who has been accused of allegedly laundering millions of pesos in campaign contributions in a privileged speech by opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson last Monday.

Not a word was spoken about the scolding of a television reporter that had caused the rift. The President was all smiles as she shook hands and made small talk during cocktails that preceded the three-hour dinner at the Heroes Hall.

Nor did Ms Macapagal comment on a manifesto earlier presented by the MPC which criticized her for berating GMA 7 reporter Tina Panganiban-Perez as well as a proposal from certain Palace officials that would make journalists conform to some kind of media guidelines when reporting on national security issues.

Press Secretary Milton Alingod later released a statement from the President thanking the MPC for their "candid and straightforward views."

Having enthusiastically embraced Perez earlier that day, the President shook hands with Perez as she arrived for the dinner. She said laughingly that the photographers were obviously waiting for a "photo opportunity" of the two of them again.

The President thanked Marissa Flores, GMA 7 vice president for news and public affairs, and Grace de la Peña-Reyes, the news operations head, for attending the dinner she hosted for the 60 MPC members and their spouses.

She had also invited ABS-CBN news director DJ Sta. Ana and Tony Velasquez, the ABS-CBN reporter covering the Palace.

As she sat with several reporters in the presidential table, the President opened the issue of Lacson's privileged speech by explaining how her husband had acquired the LTA Building on Perea Street in Makati.

She said the First Gentleman and his three brothers sold a building on Ayala Avenue that they had inherited from their mother, Lourdes Tuazon Arroyo, in 1978. She said Arroyo used his share from the sale to buy the building on Perea, now known as the LTA Building.

2004 election no threat to budget deficit—Camacho

THE GOVERNMENT is vowing to keep a tight hold on spending to hit its budget deficit target this year as it seeks to dispel worries it will loosen its grip in the run-up to the May 2004 elections.

"Expenditures historically have not really gone up during an election year," Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said yesterday.

"There is no unusual behavior of actual versus programmed expenditures during an election year, prior to an election year and after an election year. I think it's more of an intuitive concern rather than actual experience."

But some economists were skeptical about the durability of the government's measures as the election nears.

"The challenge in later 2003 is can the government restrain expenditures with elections coming around?" said Jojo Gonzales, research head at Philippine Equity Partners.

The Commission on Elections has said it will need P4.8 billion for next year's election, out of the government's proposed 2004 budget of P850 billion.

In the 1998 election, the government spent P2 billion, which included allowances for public school teachers who staffed polling stations, traveling expenses of Comelec officials, printing of ballots and transportation of ballot boxes.

The system is set to change next year as the government introduces computerized voting at polling stations.

"Fiscal discipline should be there no matter what," Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin told Reuters in another interview.

The Philippines—which blasted through its budget deficit target three times last year due to anemic tax collection—held its shortfall under control for the fourth straight month in July due to improving revenues.

The July shortfall of P15.8 billion brought the total deficit for the first seven months of the year to P95.4 billion, lower than the programmed P119 billion.

The Philippines, the largest sovereign debt issuer in Asia outside Japan, aims to cap this year's shortfall at P202 billion or about 4.7 percent of projected gross domestic product.

"The expenditure side has been brought down in anticipation that spending will increase ahead of the elections, so the overall number won't be a whack later in the year," said Song Seng Wun, regional economist at G.K. Goh Securities in Singapore.

For January to July, government spending of P453.58 billion was 1.94 percent higher than a year earlier.

"I expect it to go up, especially in the months going to the election, likely beginning in the last quarter of the year," Song said. *Reuters*

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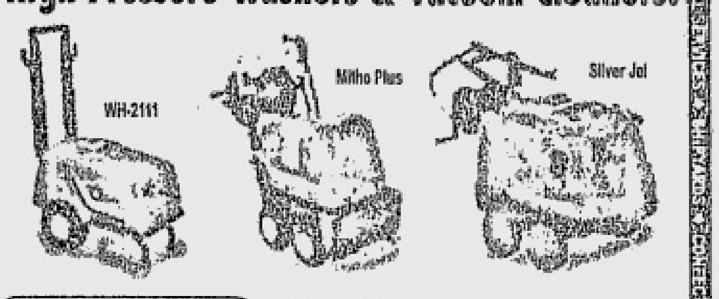

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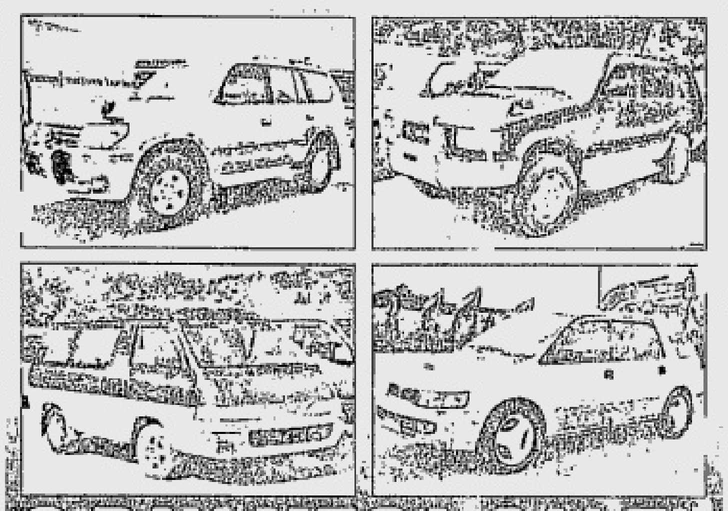

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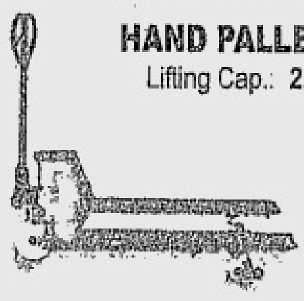

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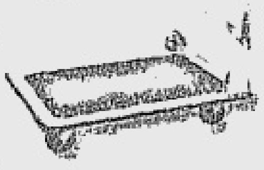

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1. Luis Manzano is a VJ in which music channel?
   a. MTV
   b. Channel V
   c. MYX
   d. None of the above
2. Lea Salonga endorses which brand of clothing line?
   a. Kamiseta
   b. Unica Hija
   c. Penshoppe
   d. Bayo
3. Which network is your "Kapuso"?
   a. ABS-CBN Channel 2
   b. GMA 7
   c. RPN 9
   d. IBC 13
4. Who is the author of Lord of the Rings?
   a. JK Rowling
   b. Stephen King
   c. JRR Tolkien
   d. Sidney Sheldon
5. This is a well-known Japanese poetry format having three lines.
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   b. Haiku
   c. Ode
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MON. - FRI. (8 AM - 7 PM) / SAT. (8 AM - 5 PM)

Mike gives media tour of 'money machine'

By Margaux Ortiz

THE "MONEY machine" at No. 118 Perea St. is a simple eight-story building with small, austere offices.

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo pointed this out during a media tour at the LTA Building in Legazpi Village, Makati, yesterday.

"*Tingnan niyo, ang* simple simple *lang ng opisina namin* (Our offices are simple)," said Arroyo, who is accused by Sen. Panfilo Lacson of laundering millions of pesos in campaign contributions to President Macapagal-Arroyo allegedly through his Jose Pidal and other accounts.

The building, which was constructed in the late 1970s, was described by Lacson as "a money machine where incredible deals are cooked and sinister schemes plotted."

"Take me to court," Arroyo said, referring to Lacson. Arroyo said he was even sharing the LTA Building with some tenants, including The Villaraza and Angcangco law offices at the ground floor. LTA stands for Lourdes Tuason Arroyo, mother of the First Gentleman.

To go up to the office of the First Gentleman on the 8th floor, one must take an elevator that can carry only six people.

Ten minutes into the guided tour, Arroyo suddenly shied away from the media and asked his spokesperson Patricia Bunye-Roxas to answer questions for him.

He went inside his small office and came out when his staff said that some people he had helped financially were looking for him.

Nine-year-old Mary Joy Guevara, who received orthopedic legs, was waiting at the First Gentleman's office the whole morning.

Mary Joy said she wanted to show her support for Arroyo when she learned that "Lacson was saying bad things about him."

A few people, who received financial assistance from Arroyo, were also at his office, saying "they felt bad" about Lacson's allegations.

Outside the building, a group of urban poor from Tondo gathered at 11:20 a.m., calling for the end to the "conjugal corruption" and the ouster of both the President and her husband.

They were dispersed by Makati policemen after 10 minutes for lack of a rally permit.

Mike A: I am not Jose Pidal

"I AM not Jose Pidal and I have no account in the name of Jose Pidal."

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo said yesterday that having a relative by the name of Jose Pidal should not be used to link him to the Pidal accounts, which opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson claims Arroyo opened to launder millions of campaign contributions to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Arroyo said it was only recently that he became aware that his great-grandmother on the paternal side was named Maria Pidal and that he only knew his grandfather as Jose Ma. Pidal Arroyo, who was from Iloilo. It turned out that his grandfather was a member of the Senate during the American period.

When his grandfather died, Arroyo said his family moved from Iloilo to Negros, which, according to him, explained why he grew up not knowing his relatives in Iloilo.

"How many of us would know the maiden name of our great-grandmother? I didn't until I checked," Arroyo said in a statement.

He reiterated his challenge to Lacson to produce the original documents proving the existence of the controversial Jose Pidal accounts.

No Pidal account in BPI

Arroyo said he welcomed the Bank of the Philippine Islands' release of a certification that there are no accounts in his name or in the name of Jose Pidal in the bank's Perea Street branch in Makati.

That BPI branch has been closed for the last four years, according to the First Gentleman.

"There is no existing Jose Pidal account and a Mike Arroyo account in BPI Family Bank or in a BPI Perea branch," BPI senior vice president Gregorio Anonas III said.

Lacson asked on Tuesday the Anti-Money Laundering Council to freeze Jose Pidal's bank accounts in Union Bank of the Philippines (000730014836) and in BPI Family Bank (6615497-7), both on Perea Street. Lacson also asked the AMLC to freeze the bank accounts of Kelvin Tan, Thomas Toh Jr., Victoria Toh, which the senator said were also used by the First Gentleman to launder money.

Arroyo said the BPI certification clearly belied Lacson's allegation that there was an alleged bank statement dated July 30, 2003 revealing millions in the name of Jose Pidal. "How could there be such a bank statement if the bank has been closed?" he asked.

He challenged Lacson to produce the original documents bearing Jose Pidal's signatures so handwriting experts from the National Bureau of Investigation and Philippine National Police could analyze them.

"We cannot and should not rely on the comparison made by Lacson in his PowerPoint presentation during his privileged speech since this is misleading, and obviously subject to alteration and digital manipulation," Arroyo said.

Imprisonment

Arroyo said Lacson could be fined or imprisoned for hurling the accusations against him.

"I would like to remind Senator Lacson that under the Anti-Money Laundering Act, any person who, with malice or in bad faith, reports or files a completely unwarranted or false information relative to money laundering transactions against any person shall be subject to imprisonment and fine," the First Gentleman said.

Lacson could face between 6 months and 4 years imprisonment and a fine of not less than P100,000 but not more than P500,000, according to Arroyo's spokesperson Patricia Bunye-Roxas. "Offenders are not entitled to probation," she said.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Senator Lacson's unwillingness to go to court with his allegations betrayed his real motive in making the exposé: destabilize the Macapagal administration.

"Obviously, the objective is not to convict but merely malign FG (First Gentleman) and destabilize President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo," Bunye said in a statement.

Bunye said Lacson was averse to going to court because he would have to make his accusations under oath; his documents would have to be authenticated before being admitted as evidence; and a judgment on the guilt or innocence of the accused would have to be made.

Stepping up its attack on Lacson, Malacañang released statements of two groups critical of Lacson. The Young Nationalist Patriots described Lacson as a "dangerous man with a questionable past and who will not stop at anything, including the destruction of the nation, to promote his presidential ambition."

Ed Fereira, Management Association of the Philippines president, urged Lacson to file charges in court instead of raising a media spectacle that could hurt the economy.

In the House of Representatives, Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez (NP, Iloilo City) said Arroyo had nothing to worry about the accusations of Lacson.

Gonzalez, a former member of the House prosecution panel during the impeachment trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada, said Lacson "does not know the difference between funds being laundered, which are fruits of a crime . . . and legitimate funds received during an election campaign."

Under the Anti-Money Laundering Act, laundered money are proceeds of drug trafficking and gambling and those being used for terrorism, according to Gonzalez.

Campaign funds are "private funds and not government funds or fruits of a crime," he said.

Gonzalez described as idle talk comparisons between Arroyo's alleged Jose Pidal bank accounts at the Union Bank and the Bank of Philippine Islands, and Estrada's Jose Velarde bank account at the Equitable PCIBank.

"Except maybe for the use of pseudonyms, the comparison stops there," Gonzalez said.

No crime involved

At best, Arroyo can be held liable for "falsification" but only if it is proven that he indeed owns the Jose Pidal accounts, the congressman said.

"Otherwise he has nothing to worry about. There is no crime involved," Gonzalez said.

In contrast, Estrada's Jose Velarde account contained proceeds of illegal activities from "jueteng to stock market manipulation," Gonzalez said.

He noted that Lacson himself had said that the P200 million alleged laundered money of Arroyo came from unused campaign contributions to then vice presidential candidate Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in the 1998 elections.

"Assuming that Attorney Arroyo retained the remainder of campaign contributions received in 1998 when GMA ran for the vice presidency, campaign contributions are legal under the Omnibus Election Code and the unspent balance cannot be considered dirty money under the money laundering law," Gonzalez said. *Reports from Gil Cabacungan Jr., Elena R. Torrijos, Margaux C. Ortiz, Carlito Pablo and Armand N. Nocum*

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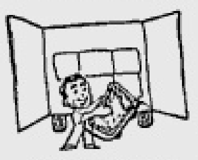
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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, August 21, 2003
20th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:	Jdg 11:29-39
Gospel:	Mt 22:1-14

Jesus began to address the chief priests and elders of the people, once more using parables:

"This story throws light on the kingdom of heaven. A king celebrated the wedding of his son. He sent his servants to call the invited guests to the wedding feast, but the guests refused to come.

"Again he sent other servants ordering them to say to the invited guests: 'I have prepared a banquet, slaughtered my fattened calves and other animals, and now everything is ready; come then, to the wedding feast.' But they paid no attention and went away, some to their fields, and others to their work. While the rest seized the servants of the king, insulted them and killed them.

"The king became angry. He sent his troops to destroy those murderers and burn their city. Then he said to his servants: 'The wedding banquet is prepared, but the invited guests were not worthy. Go then to the crossroads and invite everyone you find to the wedding feast.'

"The servants went out at once into the streets and gathered everyone they found, good and bad alike, so that the hall was filled with guests.

"The king came in to see those who were at table, and he noticed a man not wearing the festal garment. So he said to him: 'Friend, how did you get in without the wedding garment?' But the man remained silent. So the king said to his servants: 'Bind his hands and feet and throw him into the dark where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

"Know that many are called, but few are chosen."

Commentary

The people of Israel were heirs to the promise God had made to the prophets of old that he would send to them a Savior who would save them and free them from bondage. But when the promised Savior did come, many of them failed to recognize him. Like the prospective guests at the wedding feast in today's gospel reading, they showed themselves unworthy of the covenant and promise Yahweh had made with their ancestors. He had prepared a sumptuous feast for them, and all they could give in return was a rejection of his kindness and generosity, going as far as maltreating and killing his servants. And so the king decides to take back the invitation from them and hand it over to someone else—those who are more willing and thus more worthy of the feast. Just as Jesus had been rejected, so too his followers would be rejected by the very same people who were supposed to have recognized him as the promised Messiah of God. God's patience with us is so far-reaching that he never ceases to invite us despite our constant rejection of his moves. But his patience can also wear thin, and he could very well leave us in our sinful ways, if that is where we choose to stay. He has given us the freedom to accept or reject his offer, and he will never take away that freedom.

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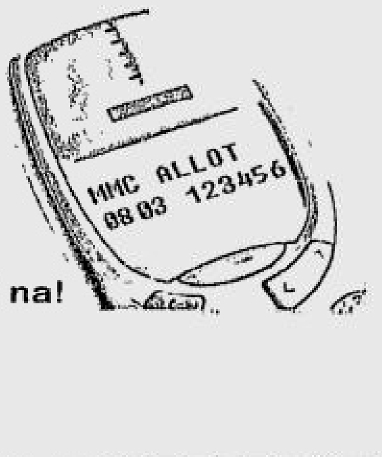

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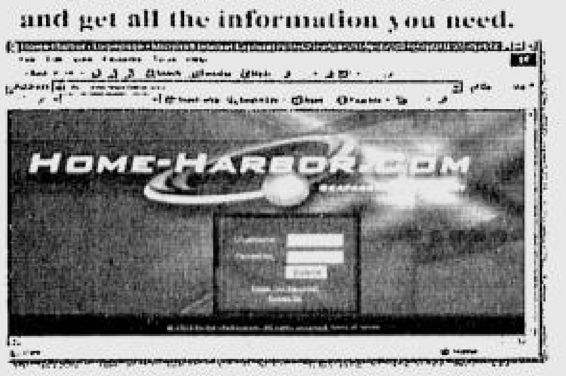

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Farmers want agri imports moratorium

By Norman Bordadora

FARMERS are seeking a moratorium on the importation of agricultural and fishery products to alleviate their plight which has been affected by the country's commitment to liberalize trade as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

"A moratorium on the importation of rice, corn, coffee, garlic, onion and other vegetables, poultry, livestock and fishery products would give immediate relief to farmers who suffered from the burdensome impacts of agricultural trade liberalization," said Danilo Ramos, secretary general of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

KMP wants the government to get out of the WTO, saying the country's agricultural production has suffered as a result of the policy of liberalization.

"Since the country's adherence to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade-WTO in 1994, rice importations increased to 540 percent," the peasant group noted. "We have been at the losing end of this highly onerous and one-sided agreement.

Trade deficit

In fact, seven years after its entry into the WTO, the Philippines incurred an agricultural trade deficit of more than $5.2 billion, Ramos said.

But the Department of Agriculture has allayed fears of a continued trade imbalance after the forthcoming 5th meeting of the WTO in Cancun, Mexico next month.

Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo recently said that the government will demand for the removal of agricultural subsidies by developed countries, otherwise, the government would impose higher tariffs on farm imports.

Lorenzo said the DA is open to petitions for the application of trade remedy measures such as countervailing and anti-dumping duties on subsidized agricultural products imported from abroad.

He added that the DA continues to negotiate for better terms and conditions from developing countries in the ongoing talks on a new Agreement on Agriculture at the WTO.

Countervailing and anti-dumping duties are imposed on imported products which are dumped in the local market at costs lower than in the country of origin.

Lorenzo said he supports the clamor of local farmers for better WTO treatment of local agricultural products that are encountering heavy competition from highly-subsidized foreign agricultural products in the domestic and global markets.

Lorenzo said that an important safety net was the imposition of additional duties on imports of agricultural products that harm the local agricultural industry.

In a recent international conference on agriculture sponsored by the United Nations in the Middle East, Lorenzo championed the cause of the agriculture sector of developing countries in struggling to compete with agricultural products from the developed nations, which are strongly subsidized by their respective governments.

Senate committee shelves meat importation bill

THE SENATE committee on food and agriculture has shelved for further study the bill limiting meat importation to countries that have been cleared of foot and mouth disease, which the meat processors claim would not just restrict their sources for manufacturing grade beef but also to drastic price increases and even the closure of many of them.

At the first hearing on the measure filed by Sen. Manuel Villar, committee chair Ramon Magsaysay Jr. said Senate Bill 1004 would greatly restrict the operations of local meat processors as it would force them to get their meat requirements only from a few sources and at very high premiums. The twin bill, introduced by Congresswoman Cynthia Villar, was recently enacted by the House of Representatives.

Magsaysay concurred with the report of Agriculture Undersecretary for Livestock Cesar Drilon that only Australia passes the measure's requirement of being FMD-free and that the price of Australian grade beef is so high that local processors might just have no option but to close shop due to weakened product demand.

As it is, Drilon said, the United States has the meat required by the local processors but the supply is just good for its own requirements; New Zealand has no manufacturing grade beef to speak of, and Canada is still grappling with mad cow disease.

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Bus firm wants ruling vs rival firm enforced

A 47-YEAR-OLD bus company has asked transport and traffic authorities to implement a cease-and-desist order against a rival bus firm allegedly operating illegally in its route.

The De Guia Enterprises, which operates the G Liner along the Cainta-Quiapo route via Ortigas Avenue, said it had been asking authorities for months to stop RRCG Transport System from fielding "unauthorized colorum" buses along the route.

Until last week, the bus firm had filed complaints against RRCG with the Department of Transportation and Communication, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) and the Metro Manila Development Authority.

De Guia Enterprises complained that the cease-and-desist order issued by the LTFRB in November last year was never carried out despite the fact that the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court had upheld the order by refusing to issue a temporary restraining order against it.

In a letter to LTFRB chair Dante Lantin, Edmundo P. Deveza, chief of operations of De Guia Enterprises, lamented that justice never came because the board's Rationalization Program legitimized what used to be the illegal operation of buses by RRCG in the Cainta-Quiapo route. Similar letters were sent to MMDA chair Bayani Fernando and Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza.

For such violations, De Guia asked the LTFRB on June 24, 2002 to cancel the certificate of public convenience of RRCG. The LTFRB issued the cease-and-desist order in November that year. While De Guia was moving for the implementation of the order, RRCG brought the case to the courts, seeking the issuance of a temporary restraining order against the LTFRB. The appellate court, and later, the Supreme Court, turned down RRCG's petition for the issuance of a TRO, paving the way for the enforcement of the order.

The order, Deveza said, was never enforced. It was overtaken by the LTFRB's rationalization program. Still, he said, RRCG continued to field illegal buses out of line in violation of the program.

Solon seeks review of Marcos PDs

By Nelson Forte Flores

AKBAYAN Party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales yesterday called on Congress to reexamine the more than 200 presidential decrees issued by deposed President Ferdinand Marcos and repeal those which are clearly oppressive.

Rosales made the call during the launching of the 9-21 Alliance composed of veteran street parliamentarians during martial law and different human rights groups. She cited for example PD 1177 (the automatic appropriations for the debt service payment) which was adopted by former President Corazon Aquino.

She explained that PD 1177 automatically appropriates 40 percent of the annual General Appropriations Act for debt servicing thereby depriving the people of a number of important services.

"For instance, this decree is one reason why Congress could not fund the modernization of the Armed Forces," Rosales explained.

Rosales said PD 1177 is clearly oppressive and must be repealed while those that are quite useful and free of any traces of oppression must be incorporated into our existing laws.

Meanwhile, Rosales said there should be "no kid glove treatment" for the rebel soldiers to deter future coup attempts. She said the light punishment like the 50 push ups meted out to previous mutineers encourages would-be mutineers to stage their coups knowing that they will be treated lightly by the government.

Rosales also called on the people to remain vigilant in choosing the next president of the country.

She further explained that the alliance was organized to commemorate the heroism and sacrifices of those who firmly opposed martial law; to alert the youth about the importance of human rights and the need to protect it against tyranny; to remind our people that the nation still suffers from the political, social and economic consequences of martial law period, including the politicization of the military and continuing servicing of our gargantuan foreign debt; and to provide an opportunity for activists and victims of martial law, as well as their families and friends to reunite and share experiences.

Peace talks to finally start next week

by Blanche S. Rivera

THE LONG overdue peace talks between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front will resume next week, an adviser to the government panel said.

Mahid Mutilan, vice governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, said that the Philippines should receive the invitation from the Malaysian government next week.

Malaysia has agreed to host the peace negotiations between the MILF and the government, but it has not yet extended the formal invitation to the Philippine government for the schedule of the talks.

"We should get the letter by next week," Mutilan said in an interview at the Asian Gathering of the Christian Bishops and Muslim Ulamas at the Westin Philippine Plaza in Manila, which concluded yesterday.

He said a lot would depend on whether new MILF chair Al Haj Murad Ebrahim would continue in the stance of deceased founder Salamat Hashim or take a different path on the talks.

Presidential adviser on the peace process Eduardo Ermita, head of the government panel, said that the government was already polishing the final draft of the peace agreement.

Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, Vatican representative to the bishops-ulamas gathering, lauded the government's peace efforts, saying the peace talks gave hope to peace and development in Mindanao. He said he was "impressed" by the government's strategy because it took on even the socio-economic approach to peace.

GMA to sign bill on dual citizenship

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday she was ready to sign a law granting dual citizenship to Filipinos who have settled abroad.

The dual citizenship act was passed earlier this week by Congress despite criticism it would weaken loyalty to the country.

It would allow those who have gained citizenship in other countries to regain their Philippine citizenship. It would largely benefit the millions of Filipinos who have become naturalized citizens of the United States and Canada.

"I appreciate Congress for working on this milestone legislation and I will sign it when it reaches my desk," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

She said the move would "extend more economic and political opportunities to Filipinos overseas in the name of national unity, solidarity and progress." Proponents of the act have said it would bring in more investment.

At present, ownership of land and management of strategic industries are limited to Filipino citizens. *AFP*

Chlorine downs 26 in Zambo

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Suspected chlorine gas sickened at least 26 people, mostly children here, authorities said yesterday.

The victims, including five adults, vomited and complained of dizziness, sore throat and severe stomach pain after inhaling gas that leaked from a cylinder at a local junkshop, said emergency room Dr. George Rojo at the Zamboanga Medical Center.

RMN radio, quoting witnesses, said residents in the village of Santa Barbara were running away in panic, some falling to the ground after being overwhelmed by the acrid smell.

Rojo said the patients would be confined at the hospital for about two days before officials declare the area safe.

City sanitary inspector Rogelio Bucoy said an initial examination indicated the gas probably was chlorine based on the yellowish crystals that formed on the metal cylinder that junkshop workers were forcing open.

Rojo said a more thorough investigation by the regional disaster coordinating center would be undertaken. *AP*

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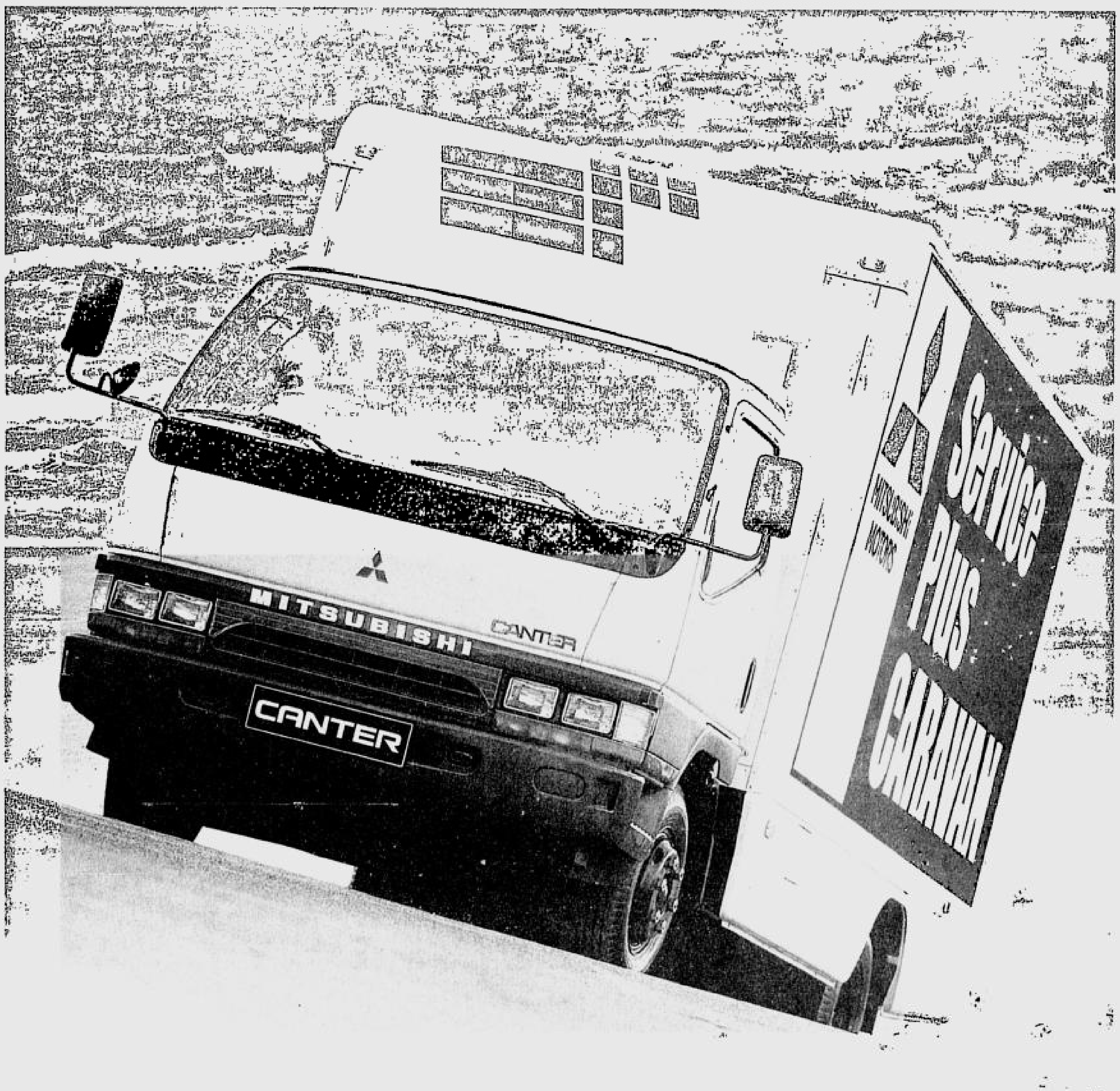

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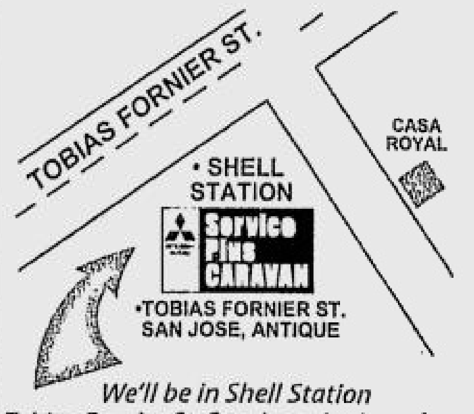

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ISSN 0116-2642
INQUIRER
Vol. 18 No. 254

OPINION

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 /
528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

Publisher **Isagani Yambot**
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The yellow revolution

EDITORIAL

THE NATION today commemorates the 20th anniversary of the assassination of former Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. The assassination stands out as one of the most outrageous political murders in the history of this country, including the murder of Andres Bonifacio in the midst of the Philippine Revolution that began in 1896 and the execution of Dr. Jose Rizal by Spanish musketry.

A move has been initiated in Congress by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel to proclaim Aquino a national hero in the category of Rizal and Bonifacio. While it is odious to make comparisons among the three, they share some things in common: a passion to fight for freedom and the willingness to lay down their lives in the struggle.

There are other similarities. Aquino's murder was an upshot of political conflict and his rivalry with Marcos, while Bonifacio's stemmed from the struggle for power and leadership of the Revolution between the contending factions of the Katipunan. Both died at the hands of their countrymen. Up until now, 20 years after the murder at the tarmac of the Manila International Airport, the crime has not been solved, and the mastermind of the assassination has remained a mystery. Similarly, Bonifacio's murder remains unsolved.

The demand for the solution of the Aquino assassination commands public attention 20 years after the act. Although a trial during the administration of President Corazon Aquino found 16 soldiers guilty, the conviction sparked calls for a wider search for those who were responsible for the murder.

Rizal's execution, after a trial on trumped-up charges, sparked the 1898 Revolution that led to the end of more than three centuries of Spanish rule. Aquino's assassination was similarly a defining event in Philippine history. It set off a chain of events that led to the overthrow of 14 years of the Marcos dictatorship. The murder of Aquino, who was jailed by Marcos upon the declaration of martial law in 1972, was the foremost symbol in the struggle for the restoration of freedom and democracy.

People power owes its origin to the Aquino murder. The assassination radically altered and transformed the Philippine political landscape. It harnessed the undercurrent of popular resistance to the dictatorship. Aquino's funeral marked the time when Filipinos ceased to be afraid to proclaim their demand for liberty.

Before then, Filipinos had lived in fear, and, except for a few brave souls, lost their voice to protest the abuses of the regime. The assassination emancipated Filipinos from their bondage. A vast transformation took place in the horizon of political action after the assassination.

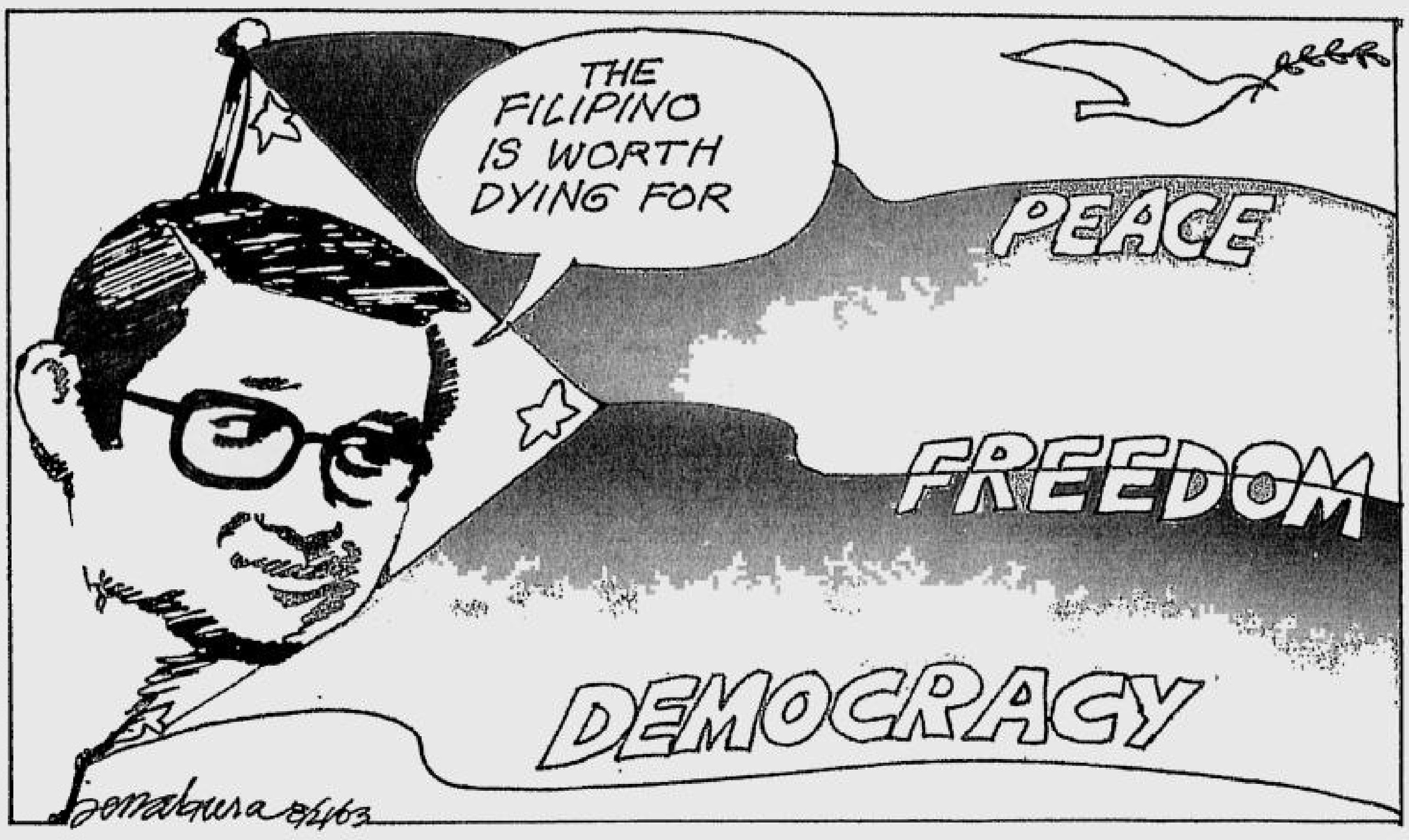
Aquino returned from exile to carry on the struggle for political emancipation, without sounding the clarion call of revolution and armed struggle. He came home alone, knowing the risk to his life.

Prior to Aquino's tragic homecoming, the color of resistance to the Marcos dictatorship and even of revolution to change the social order was red, with flags being waved by demonstrators singing the "Internationale." Although he was not a leftist revolutionary, Aquino nevertheless showed in his writings in exile that he recognized the inequities of the elite-dominated social order. But he embodied the principle of passive resistance incarnated by his model, Mahatma Gandhi.

Yellow, the color of a homecoming, became the emblem of the unarmed resistance to the dictatorship. Yellow swept aside the red flags of the radical revolutionaries who, since the end of World War II, had failed to mobilize widespread popular support for their revolution.

Aquino's death rallied the multitudes behind his movement for reform and return to democracy and stole the initiative from the radicals who, in the end were swallowed by the current of the middle-class resistance to the dictatorship. His Yellow Revolution unearthed the depth and breadth of the middle-class constituency that provided the backbone of the People Power Revolution of 1986, tapped by the aboveground legal political opposition led by his widow.

As we commemorate Aquino's assassination in the aftermath of another coup attempt, we would do well to remember that its most significant result was to mobilize the middle class for a non-violent method of political change.


THE FILIPINO IS WORTH DYING FOR
PEACE
FREEDOM
DEMOCRACY

Who killed Ninoy?

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

WHO killed Ninoy Aquino 20 years ago? According to the Agrava Commission, the triggerman was C1C Rogelio Moreno, now in prison with 14 others. But who ordered the assassination? Who was the mastermind?

This is a question that may remain a mystery along with "Who ordered the assassination of Antonio Luna?" and "Who engineered the execution of Andres Bonifacio?"

All or some of the 15 soldiers serving time in prison for the killing must know the mastermind but they are not talking—yet. Rep. Noynoy Aquino said the Aquino family knows but he refuses to give any names, although he has already cleared his uncle Danding Cojuangco. Other principal actors in the tragedy have already died of natural causes: President Marcos, Gen. Fabian Ver and Brig. Gen. Luther Custodio, chief of the Aviation Security Command which had been ordered to "secure" Ninoy upon his arrival at the airport now named after him.

Will the truth ever be known, or will it continue to be a big question mark just like the question of whether Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone or in conspiracy with others in assassinating President Kennedy?

Many people have their own candidates as mastermind but they have no proof. The Avsecom 15 maintain Rolando Galman was the killer, but his family stoutly maintains that he was just a fall guy.

The 20-year prescription period for the crime expires at midnight tonight, which means that after that the mastermind can no longer be prosecuted even if he is identified. But the Department of Justice claims the rule does not apply to the "John Does," or unidentified co-conspirators, included in the complaint. So the convicted co-conspirators may take the mastermind's identity to their graves.

Curiously, in spite of their vow of *omerta* (silence), the 15 convicts hope to be given executive clemency or parole soon. And also curiously, the Board of Pardons and Parole has actually recommended just that, saying this is "routinely" done to all prisoners.

But the Avsecom 15 are no ordinary prisoners, and their victim was no ordinary person. They should not be treated "routinely." The Aquino family, of course, opposes any leniency for them.

If they really want to be free sooner, why not offer them that in exchange for the identity of the mastermind? That should be a fair exchange. Twenty years is a long time. They have suffered enough for their silence. It's time to speak out and be free again. It is as if the saying "The truth shall set you free" was coined specially for them.

Why not? Maybe the mastermind is among those already dead. Or maybe he or she is old enough today and will likely die before the trial is over. Or he or she may soon be old enough not to be sent to prison or executed. If I am not mistaken, the law provides that a person who is over 75 years old cannot be imprisoned. If he is already in prison when he turns 75, he would be set free.

Readers of detective novels have a formula to identify the killer or mastermind: Who would be most benefited by the death of the victim? So who was the person most benefited by Ninoy's death?

* * *

Another mystery in history involves two other heroes of the Philippines: President Manuel L. Quezon, whose 125th birth anniversary was celebrated only two days ago, and Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

War came to the Philippines 10 hours after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. MacArthur was immediately informed and received direct telephone calls from Washington on Monday morning, shortly after the raid, specifically telling him not to get caught "with his air force on the ground."

MacArthur's war plan was to launch preemptive strikes on Japanese airfields in Formosa at the outbreak of hostilities. His air commander, General Brereton, had urged him to do just that upon receiving reports on the Pearl Harbor attack but MacArthut hesitated. So his whole air force was caught and destroyed by the Japanese on the ground in Clark Field.

According to historian John Costello in his book "Days of Infamy," the strategic disaster in the Philippines "made the loss of four battleships (in Hawaii) seem relatively insignificant. The bombers from Formosa had caught the greatest concentration of American air power outside the continental United States like sitting ducks. The loss of more than half its strength in a single blow doomed the defense of the Philippines before it could be begun. It also contributed to the loss of Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies because the long-range B-17 bomber force was the linchpin of their defense."

The surrender of USAFFE forces on April 9, 1942 was "the greatest military defeat ever inflicted on United States forces in the field," Costello wrote.

Why did MacArthur hesitate to launch a preemptive strike on the Japanese airfield in Formosa? Costello said it was because President Quezon and other Filipino leaders "had entertained the hope that the Japanese would not attack if they were not attacked first by MacArthur's forces" and that the American general succumbed to pressure from Quezon.

Why would MacArthur, who fought President Harry Truman during the Korean War, succumb to pressure from a diminutive Filipino president? Because of $500,000 ($5 million in current value), as evidenced by the private papers of General Sutherland, his former chief of staff, now deposited in the National Archives, according to Costello.

Is this the reason for MacArthur's inaction? We will never know.

'Hindi ka nag-iisa'

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THE 20TH anniversary of Ninoy Aquino's assassination today offers an excellent opportunity to do two seemingly contradictory things.

One is to look at it with passion, to relive the events of 20 years ago, to feel again the sorrow the event brought upon the land and the outrage it sparked in its aftermath. Doubtless, that is what most people will do today, urged on by groups like Atom which once turned this country into a sea of yellow. Which is a good thing. This country is a most forgetful one, and anything that reminds it of its past, or makes the kids appreciate the contributions of those that went before to the blessings they enjoy now, is worth having.

Quite apart from that, we owe it to Ninoy. What he did was a courageous thing, coming back to the country while it lay in uncertainty, amid the most serious threats to his life. Some will prefer to look at what he did as a gamble he lost. Most of us will prefer to look at it as a tragic fate he courted, knowing only what he had to do and accepting the consequences it brought. Which he won, though at the cost of his life. That is the stuff of tragedy, that is the stuff of legend.

He was the one Ferdinand Marcos most feared. He was the most likely to succeed him as president in the 1973 elections. They would never have squared off (Marcos could not run again after two terms) but if they had, Ninoy would have beaten him roundly. It wasn't just that Ninoy had become exceedingly popular, it was that Marcos had become exceedingly unpopular.

And so Marcos made him the first victim of martial law and hounded him the rest of his life, fearing the crown would never rest easy on his head so long as he was alive or free. And like a Shakespearean tragedy, it did slip from his head precisely because of Ninoy, though ironically it wasn't because Ninoy was alive or free but because he was dead and buried. The funeral procession that wound around the streets of the city did not just bring Ninoy to the grave, it did so Marcos. The first in triumph, the second in ignominy.

But the other thing Ninoy's 20th death anniversary offers is the opportunity to look at the event from a distance, and appraise its significance without the mists emanating from the strains of "Magkaisa." The contradiction is only seeming; the one does not preclude the other. Reliving the events of 20 years ago does not prevent us from looking at them through the lens of time, with the sense of proportion that it brings.

That means seeing as well the contributions of other people to the blessings we now enjoy. Our need to remember Ninoy with passion and appreciation is our same need to remember the others who went before him and alongside him with passion and appreciation. The most powerful line that arose from Ninoy's death, like an aura or essence that eventually suffused the world, was "*Hindi ka nag-iisa*." What a miraculous line that leaped from mouths newly opened.

But I've always thought that didn't just mean that Ninoy hadn't died alone, the rest of the country had died with him. It didn't just mean he would resurrect alone, the rest of the country would resurrect with him. It also meant he wasn't the only one to have done what he did. He wasn't the only one to have chosen to do what he had to do despite the threat of death. Others had, too. Ninoy was not alone.

Not all of them died. Many of them lived, some till old age, and dedicated their lives to making this country better. I should think the 20th death anniversary of Ninoy should also be an occasion to remember the nth life anniversaries of Jose W. Diokno, Lorenzo Tañada and Joaquin Roces. We owe them, too, a monumental debt of gratitude, notwithstanding that their deaths were not as dramatic as Ninoy's, though their lives were often more so.

Diokno was the one who fought hardest to push, often vainly but always valiantly, human rights in this country. Indeed, well after Marcos was gone, though he did not live long enough to see his work through—it was thwarted soon after he was gone. Chino Roces was the one who fought hardest to bring back freedom to the press and decency to government. He succeeded in the first but failed in the second, but not before finding the opportunity before he died to upbraid the succeeding government for threatening to become the ogre it killed. And Tanny, ah, but he was the very symbol of freedom and independence, not only because he remained a nationalist all his life but because he refused to bow down to tyranny all his life, which was a very, very long one.

Indeed, the 20th death anniversary of Ninoy offers an opportunity to remember the activists of the 1970s and early 1980s who took to the hills rather than to America, enduring the pangs of a far more dangerous exile. Many of them suffered deaths that were never reported, or ever sung. Many of them disappeared, not just from the face of the earth but from the memories of their countrymen. Some of them are still around, though maimed in body, if not mind, waiting for redress in their class suit against Marcos.

These are not people who just came before or with Ninoy and deserve to be spared some thought. These are people who prepared, quarter by quarter, sinew by sinew, blood by blood, the ground that made Ninoy's death bear fruit. Their deaths, or lives, are intertwined with that death, giving it the significance it took, turning it into the fuse that set off the explosion. Ninoy's death does not exist apart from them. It cannot be understood apart from them.

After 20 years, it's time we took seriously the other line delivered from the womb of that death, the one JaJa took on as its mission: Justice for Aquino, Justice for All. After 20 years, it should also mean: Flowers for Aquino, Flowers for All.

Hindi ka nag-iisa.

Campaign funds not covered by Amla

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

TWENTY years ago today, a shot fired at the old Manila International Airport ricocheted around the country and reverberated around the world.

When opposition leader Ninoy Aquino landed at MIA, he was fully aware of a conspiracy long suspected to have involved ranking Marcos supporters and some military men to put a bullet through his head to stop him from giving Marcos a fight. That shot not only rang around the world, it changed the course of history. It marked the beginning of the end for the Marcos regime.

Ninoy's heinous murder aroused in the Filipino people a collective outrage never before witnessed here and manifested in increasingly vociferous rallies and protests against Marcos and his cronies over the next two years. The last straw was when the dictator sought to cheat Cory of victory in the snap presidential election of February 1986. With the mutiny of a military faction led by Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile and acting AFP Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos as the catalyst, the collective outrage galvanized into people power which finally drove Marcos out of Malacañang. That unique brand of non-violent people power revolution became the model for many countries battling despots around the world and for that we Filipinos held our heads high among nations.

* * *

The restoration of democracy, however, has only highlighted the continuing need to protect and strengthen its institutions and make them work to develop a vibrant and strong nation. This task proved more difficult than marching against the dictator in the glory days of people power, especially in the light of the recent failed Oakwood rebellion and the continuing corruption in our midst. As we remember Ninoy's martyrdom, let us renew our commitment to protect our fragile democracy and make it truly work for our people.

* * *

Sen. Panfilo Lacson has attacked the First Gentleman by portraying the unused contributions to his wife's campaign as "dirty money." He has asked the Anti Money-Laundering Council to freeze these funds under the Anti Money-Laundering Act (Amla) and make Arroyo answer for them. The opposition now likens the case to that of "Jose Velarde" who, the government maintains, was Joseph Estrada. But as Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez points out, there's a world of difference between the two cases. He pointed out that funds covered by Amla are those that are "fruits of a crime" and the law specifies them. They include funds derived from *jueteng* or stock manipulations, such as Erap is now being tried for, as well as drug money or ransom money from kidnapping. On the other hand, funds received during an election campaign are private funds and not government funds or fruits of a crime, so that even presuming that Mike Arroyo indeed retained unused funds received during his wife's campaign in 1998, those cannot be considered "dirty money" under Amla. Thus, Gonzalez said, unless Lacson can prove that the campaign funds received violated the Omnibus Election Code, "no law is violated if the remainder of those funds are retained by the candidate."

* * *

The fact is that our election laws are not strict about accounting for campaign contributions, unlike in the US where the two big political parties are penalized if they exceed their funding counterpart to the financial subsidies from the federal government. As Gonzalez noted, our laws do not require candidates to return the unspent balance of campaign funds. In fact, a defeated presidential candidate in 1992 made so much money from contributions and bought properties left and right. If our laws were stricter, perhaps Lacson himself would be in hot water, for it is no secret that in the 2001 elections his campaign was one of the best-funded, since he was said to have been backed up by rich Binondo Chinese. Even now, as he prepares for his 2004 campaign, his big war chest is the talk of the town, evidenced by his many media handlers and his propensity to give out donations of as much as P100,000 to clubs that invite him as speaker.

* * *

Last Monday when Lacson delivered his "bombshell," Sen. Ramon Magsaysay, chair of the Senate defense committee, was scheduled to report his committee's stand opposing the return of Senate Report 236 (formerly Senate Report No. 66) to the three committees that had lengthily investigated the alleged involvement of Lacson and other former PNP officials in drug trafficking, kidnap for ransom and other criminal activities. Earlier Sen. Robert Barbers, chair of the committee on public order and illegal drugs, delivered his sponsorship speech after being stymied by the opposition for over a year. The next step was for the Senate to vote whether to adopt or reject it. But Lacson objected to the vote, arguing that he had fresh evidence contradicting the report.

* * *

Barbers and Sen. Joker Arroyo, chair of the blue ribbon committee, refused to recommit the report, echoing the sentiment of many of their colleagues that more than enough time has been given to the investigation that winded up in October 2001. But Magsaysay, to ease the tension, moved to defer the vote, saying he wanted to consult the members of his committee first. Lacson might have learned that Magsaysay's committee was rejecting recommitment, prompting him to detonate his bombshell. A yes vote will send the report to the Department of Justice, which presumably will act to further investigate Lacson and his men and file appropriate criminal charges against them for various crimes. But voting could again be stymied because Lacson and his fellow oppositionists, Senators Edgardo Angara and Vicente Sotto, want to interpellate Barbers some more. *Baka hindi na naman mapagbotohan ang* committee report.

The dream never died

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

REP. Butz Aquino, Ninoy's brother, shared this story recently to illustrate just how much work has to be done to keep Ninoy's memory alive and still meaningful to Filipinos today.

During the filming of the movie "Dekada '70," the director was having a hard time motivating the youthful "extras" to show signs of grief in a scene depicting the historic funeral of Ninoy Aquino. "Why aren't you crying?" the director pleaded. "Don't you know who Ninoy is?" To his shock, the young people admitted that they had no idea. Frustrated, the director relented. "All right, just imagine that Rico Yan (a young actor who died just over a year ago) has just died and you are taking part in his funeral," he said. At that, the young extras had no trouble summoning their tears.

That a pop star should command more adulation than Ninoy Aquino may be a commentary on how fickle is public devotion as well as how fleeting is public memory. But it may not all be young people's fault. Perhaps it's also a commentary on how we, the generation charged with fulfilling Ninoy's vision and dreams, have instead squandered his magnificent legacy. Perhaps it's a result of our letting petty, selfish interests and political differences slow down, if not derail, the pursuit of the ends to which he sacrificed his life.

As Ninoy's widow, former President Cory Aquino, asked in a talk she gave before the business community last month: "Twenty years after his ultimate sacrifice, what would Ninoy have to say about where we, the recognized leaders of business and politics, have brought our country and our people? And while we are engaged in soul-searching, let us ask ourselves, where do we go from here?"

* * *

YESTERDAY, Cory provided some of the answers at the launching of the "People Power People Movement," which seeks to enshrine the ideals of "People Power," arising directly from Ninoy's sacrifice, by recognizing the efforts of non-government and people's organizations engaged in nation building by providing direct services to people and communities.

Personally speaking, I am elated by the recognition of Lihok Pilipina, founded by the members of the Cebu chapter of Pilipina, the national women's organization of which I am chair, as one of the 20 "People Power People" organizations worthy of emulation. Best known for establishing "Bantay Banay," a multi-sectoral network that harnesses community and government resources to address the issue of violence against women, "Lihok" exemplifies the spirit of civic activism and social concern that, I think, Ninoy sought to instill in his fellow Filipinos.

In her speech last month, Cory explained how she envisioned the "People Power People" movement:

"Listening to political analysts, one would think that People Power was in tatters. Where are the cheering crowds, they asked on the 17th anniversary of Edsa last February, which was celebrated with a simple Mass inside the Edsa Shrine."

"In the face of such jeering cynicism, I feel it is time to harness people power in its fullest sense. It is time to equate people power not simply as a political tool, but more importantly as an ideology of hope.

* * *

"AT THIS time, when our faith in our institutions seems to be faltering, and our children are looking for greener pastures abroad, we need an ideology that can inspire us to action and reclaim the future that we seem to have lost sight of.

"People power, as I know it, refers to the collective efforts of individuals and communities to take control over their lives to pursue the common good for the greatest number.

"We accomplished this politically in Edsa in 1986 and again in 2001. Now I believe it is time to make people power work for the Filipino economically and morally, by using it to create a dynamic, progressive, caring and compassionate society, the kind our children would be proud to be a part of.

"During the past two months, I have been traveling around the country meeting with Filipinos who have been doing extraordinary things for their fellow Filipinos. I have been inspired by the selflessness and caring of these people who have committed themselves to make life better for others. They truly represent what People Power People are all about.

"People Power People generally work quietly and willingly, neither seeking nor getting publicity, but making a real difference in their communities. They bring health, livelihood, education, housing, and most important of all, empowerment, to people—especially the poor—who would otherwise lose hope in their situation.

"I was thinking, if enough of us stopped complaining about how bad things are and did something to improve our environment, if we took responsibility for our communities, if we placed duty to country and people ahead of our personal interests, if we set aside politics for the higher goal of national unity and progress, we could inspire and uplift, teach, and transform society."

* * *

THIS, then is how Cory would have us celebrate Ninoy's life, death and legacy. By remembering not just how he died, but what he stood for, what he fought for and what he sought to leave behind.

During discussions on how best to "re-define" People Power today, someone pointed out that Ninoy had in fact merely sought to tap into the stream of nationalism and social activism that had been steadily flowering in the 1960s and 1970s until it was cut short by martial law. Though if one would only trace the history of many of the "People Power People" groups honored yesterday, one would note that the stream never really dried up, but only sought other directions and expressions until it was free to surface once more.

The dream never died. Now, if only we can get the rest of the nation to dream with us once more.

Aquino-Galman 15: 'Nothing to say till I die' (1)

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

TWENTY years after Ninoy Aquino was gunned down and Rolando Galman was himself peppered with bullets moments after Aquino fell dead, the lowly soldiers convicted in the double murder case continue to serve their sentence at the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City. They are in the maximum security compound where about 10,000 inmates are housed.

From each of the Aquino-Galman convicts, one is not likely to hear a blanket declaration of innocence that covers every one like, say, "We are innocent, we did not know anything." Instead, one hears, "*Ako, walang kinalaman, walang alam* (I had nothing to do with it, I knew nothing)." Each one speaks for himself only when the conspiracy angle is brought up. For who knows what the others may be keeping in their hearts? It is not all for one, one for all as most people think.

But hopes are high that freedom is not far away. Says Capt. Romeo Bautista: "If the 20-year period prescribes on Aug. 21, 2003 for those who are at large and have not been charged, and therefore they can no longer be arrested or charged, what about us who have served time?" Bautista wants to point out that they now deserve to be free, their protestation of innocence notwithstanding. Bautista was head of Avsecom's intelligence then. Next to Brig. Gen. Luther Custodio (who died in prison), Bautista is the highest ranking among the 16 convicts. The rest are sergeants and a second lieutenant.

Twenty years after a crime was committed, new evidence cannot be used to charge anyone who may have been party to the crime—as long as the person was in the country during those 20 years. If the person spent time outside the country such time would not be included in counting the 20 years. The burden is on the accused to prove this was not so or that he was away for only so long.

Theoretically, therefore, suspects in the double murder case who spent time abroad should not rest easy after Aug. 21, 2003 for they could still be charged. The 20-year count applies only to the Philippines where the court has jurisdiction over them.

Also, once a person has been charged within the 20-year period, the prescribed period no longer applies. The prescription period applies to suspects who, for fear of prosecution, went into hiding but stayed in the country for 20 years after the crime happened. After 20 years, unless they could be accurately pointed to as the John Does, they could come out of hiding.

Or suspects, charged or uncharged, who had fled could stay on in another country where there is no danger of extradition and never come back—which is what some suspects in the Aquino-Galman case have done.

Still likely to be nabbed are suspects who fled abroad and have never been charged and now have come home. For them, the 20 years will not yet prescribe on Aug. 21, 2003. Other witnesses and participants in the crime, silent and fearing arrest all these 20 years, might just come out of the woodwork and make known the guilt of many.

The double murder case had been investigated by the Fernando Commission, then the Agrava Commission. The accused had been tried in the Sandiganbayan under Justice Manuel Pamaran and acquitted in 1985, during the time of President Ferdinand Marcos.

After Marcos was deposed and Ninoy's widow, Corazon Aquino, became president, citizens petitioned the Supreme Court to reopen the case. The case was again tried in a Special Division of the Sandiganbayan.

In 1990 the Sandiganbayan handed down its decision. Sixteen were found guilty and 20 were acquitted for lack of evidence. The decision was penned by Associate Justice Regino Hermosisima. Justices Jose S. Balajadia and Cipriano A. del Rosario concurred.

As of today, the convicts have served 13 years (counting from 1990) plus the years they were in detention while they were being tried the first time and the second time—a total of about 18 years. Reclusion perpetua or a life sentence is only 30 years and a double sentence is served simultaneously. Because of their life sentence, the convicts cannot apply to be released on parole, only for either pardon or commutation of sentence.

But questions remain. Who were the brains? The conspiracy was so well laid out it could only have been plotted at the top, it could not but have involved persons with massive power and resources. And yet the convicts in the case are mostly underlings, small fry, who could only have acted on obedience and played their part in an elaborate plot they knew little or nothing about.

If only someone among them, someone in the know, would spill the beans that could lead upstairs. Someone did try, those I interviewed recently reminded me. In 1995, the INQUIRER ran a six-part series that detailed the "soldiers' version" of the assassination. Sgt. Pablo Martinez, the man with Galman under the airplane stairs, revealed what he knew. That, Martinez's fellow convicts think, was a significant lead that could have led in another direction. But, they claim, no one wanted to look there.

When that series came out, the Aquino-Galman convicts were separated from each other and put in isolation for six months.

Team Alpha's Sgt. Cordova Estelo, one of those who shot Galman, rode in the van that brought Aquino's body to Fort Bonifacio. He sat beside the bloodied Aquino, touched him. It pains him when told about the theory that Aquino might have been hit on the head inside the van to make sure he was really dead.

Estelo asserts he has nothing new to reveal. "Nothing, until I die. Or even if they have me here for 100 years." *(To be continued)*

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Has anybody seen my Papa?

YOUNG BLOOD

Charina Reyes

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

IS this normal? Am I insane? I've been trying to get over this feeling, but it's been two years now and I'm still waiting, looking, yearning. Could you help me find the answers?

Okay. Fine. I'll tell you all about it. It's like this: Our Papa, he left us. People say that he died. Oh yes, I was there. I even attended his burial and stood right in front of his grave, but was that actually him? That man could be an impostor. I believe he was an impostor.

I can still remember that the night after he "went away," Papa kissed me on the cheek. I've even got imprints of that memory preserved on my brain to prove he actually did, in case you don't believe me.

That same night, too, I heard him call out my name. It is my task to open the door for him when he comes home in the wee hours of the morning.

There have been nights when I heard him speak to me. Once he even hugged me and told me he loved me very much.

All these incidents confirm my belief that he is still alive. But where could he be?

In case you bump into him, please tell him to come see me at once. A lot has happened since he went missing. It was his ultimate dream for me to go to America. Well, I've been there; I even have a picture taken at the Statue of Liberty to show for it. I bet he would show this picture to the whole town, to the mayor even, because he will feel so proud of me.

Oh, by the way, I want to tell him a really funny thing that happened while I was in the United States. Once when I went to Times Square, I believe I saw him there among the huge crowd. After I caught a glimpse of him, I searched frantically for him. The experience was quite exciting. I mean, is it possible to recognize somebody in the midst of one million people? Since I had not seen him for quite a while, I figured he must have gone ahead of me to make sure I knew where I was heading. Unfortunately I couldn't catch up with him.

Some time after that episode, I learned from my Mom that my cousin had seen Pops the previous night. I must have missed him very badly to imagine that I had actually spotted him among the huge throng on Times Square.

There are a lot of other things I want to tell Papa. Does he know that we already have a CD-Writer? My brothers and I have downloaded some of his favorite songs so that when he comes back, we can start "burning" them. I bet he'd like that. Who doesn't want free CDs anyway?

I've got questions that only he can answer. Like, how does one cook *sinaing na tulingan*? He makes the best *sinaing* I have ever tasted, and after he went away we have not tasted anything close to it.

I also want to ask him the name of our neighbor who moved to another place. I happened to share a ride with him in a jeepney and I was quite embarrassed when I couldn't remember his name.

But above all I want to ask him some very ordinary questions like: How was his day? Was it fun? Was he able to rest? Does he miss us as much as we miss him?

I can't understand how I'd let the opportunities pass, how I had taken his presence for granted. I wouldn't have thought about all this if he were here still around. It's really ironic, don't you think?

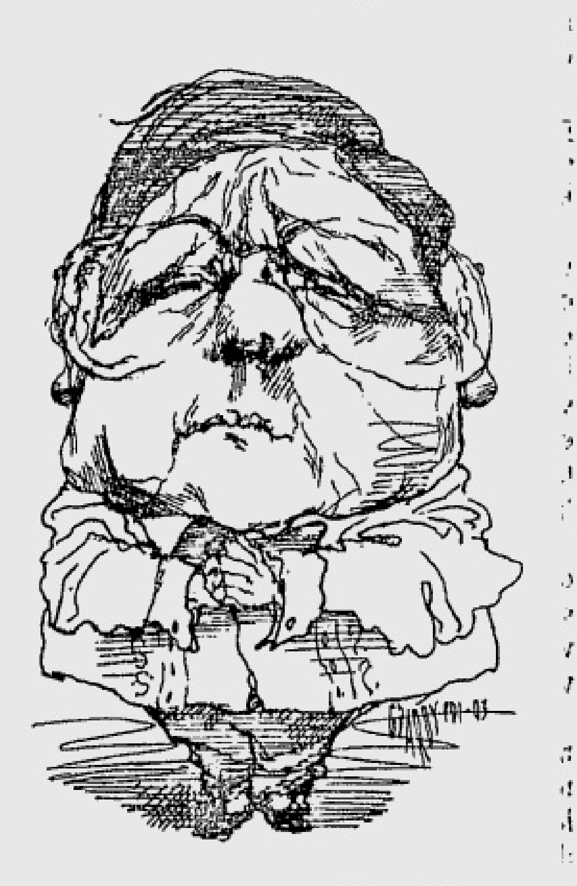
Do you think he knows how much I love him? How much I appreciate everything that he's done for me, and for our family? How much I want to fulfill all his dreams for me so that I can make him the proudest father ever? Do you think he'll come back when he finds out how crazy our lives has been since he went away?

Oh, please, I have to see him when Father's Day comes again next year. I cannot bear spending another Father's Day without him. I will be very envious of all the other kids who have their dads to spend the whole day with. When he comes back, I'm going to make sure that it will be the grandest celebration ever. And every day from that moment on will be Father's Day.

My Dearest Papa, I terribly miss you! How I long to see you and hear you talk about the old times. I miss everything about you. I want you to know that I love you and that I was wrong when I said I had told you everything that night. I am sorry. I'll see you someday.

Charina Reyes, 27, is an occupational therapist. She has a 4-year-old daughter.

IN THE NEWS



First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo

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'In fairness'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

LATELY I've been hearing more Filipinos, especially the younger ones, using phrases like "in fairness" and "to be fair."

I've realized that the phrase's popularity is coming in from movie gossip talk shows, where commentators seem to be dropping "in fairness" every other second. After yakking about the latest dirt in a celebrity's life, the show-biz reporter will add, "In fairness, we haven't asked the celebrity for his side." It's a strange after-the-fact application of the notion of fairness—almost a way of seeking absolution for gossip and backbiting.

I'm not surprised that we've distorted the meaning of "fairness." Fairness is a difficult concept to grasp, especially in feudal societies like our own, where the powerful define fairness in terms of their own rights being paramount, above everyone else's. Thus, when politicians appeal to the mass media for "fairness," what they actually mean is: "It's okay if you print bad stories about my opponents but don't even think about doing that with me."

Notice we don't even have a strong equivalent Filipino word for "fairness." The other week I was talking with a worker and wanted to know if he thought his salary was fair. I found myself at a loss for the proper word in Filipino and finally used the English term.

When I asked around for the correct Filipino word, people offered *"patas."* But I don't think it quite captures the meaning of "fair." *Patas* is "equal" but "equal" isn't the same as "fair." When you ask a laborer if his salary is *patas*, the question hangs there because "equal" needs a qualifier. Do you mean equal to one's needs, or equal to one's work output? "Fair" captures many different dimensions in one sweep, a fair salary being one that considers both needs and skills of the worker, as well as the employer's own investments and profit margins.

After graduating from college I worked for a few years with the social action arm of the Roman Catholic Church. We had an amazingly simple salary scale at that time: If you were single, your monthly salary was P600. If you were married without children, it was P700 and if you were married with children, you got P800.

Many of you will probably say that's unfair. Well, as far as we were concerned at that time, it was perfectly fair. It didn't matter that Dr. Tan got P600 and our janitor got P800 because our janitor had greater needs than I had, and therefore deserved more.

Although in retrospect I think that three-level scale was too simplistic, not even quite reflecting the complexity of needs, I still agree with the principle of fairness that was used, i.e., those with more in life should be willing to work for less. Thus, I will in one breath say that our salaries at UP are unfairly low, but will also say that I think it's only fair to continue teaching at UP since I've been more fortunate in life and my needs are easily met.

Fairness is not built on a mechanical application of the notion of "equal." Quite often, fairness may mean giving special preference to those who have less to start with. This notion of giving a headstart to people with a disadvantage is at the heart of "affirmative action" in the United States. For example, universities will increase admission quotas for members of cultural minority groups, based on the recognition that they were marginalized for decades and that society needs to make amends, giving them extra opportunities to pull themselves up.

When I proposed an affirmative action component in our department's admissions policy, I actually met opposition. One faculty member protested, "But we are all minorities. There is no majority ethnic group in the Philippines."

Here's an example of where *patas* falls apart. Sure, Tagalogs and Tausugs and Tagbanwas are all *patas* in the sense that they are all numerical minorities, but we know, too, that there are vast differences in the economic and social status of the three groups, and that a preferential option needs to be given to the Tausug and Tagbanwa.

Note, though, that "fairness" here is not reduced to a matter of ethnicity—final admission will still depend on many other considerations, including a student's capabilities. Neither does fairness end with affirmative action in the admissions policy. Thus, if we eventually accept a student from a cultural minority group, even if his or her grades were not too good, it would be again be unfair to just leave the student to try to survive alone. To be fair, the university needs to give special support to help such students get through university, through scholarships and tutorials.

We need to talk more about fairness in our daily lives. When a driver creates his or her own counterflow, driving down the wrong lane to get to the next intersection, the principle of fairness is violated, the moron having jumped the queue and, worse, possibly jamming traffic flow coming from the other direction and wasting more precious time of numerous motorists.

"Unfair" behavior is really cheating. When a student copies someone else's work, he or she is being unfair to those who put in time and effort to prepare for the exam. Similarly, on the part of faculty members, it would be unfair to allow mediocre work to pass because this "cheats" students who put in so much more effort into their papers.

Eventually, we have to recognize that fairness is crucial as well for a nation to develop. Our unfair system of patronage in the workplace and in politics is a major reason why so many Filipinos leave the country. There is the perception that one's chances of success are tied to who you know, rather than one's skills or meritorious service. On a macro scale, we lose many potential investments, from both Filipinos and foreigners, because our system is seen as unfair, again based on connections and patronage and rules and policies being changed midway through a project.

It's interesting we adopted the Spanish *patas* to mean "fair" when it's actually a term used in relation to games and sports, referring to a tie or a draw. The correct Spanish word for "fair" is actually *"justo"* (just). The sooner we develop an ethos around fairness as it should be, tied to justice and equity, the better it will be for our country.

***

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

Edsa spirit is dead

THE OAKWOOD rebellion has shown the world how divisive our government is, that even our Armed Forces is plagued with graft and corruption.

It was not the first time that kind of "incident" happened and I am sure it will not be the last. There will always be someone who will speak out; there will always be someone who will have the courage to open the can of worms. But the question is, who will be there to listen?

This kind of thing is not only happening in the military, it is everywhere in this government, national and local. And as long as we looked the other way to what is happening, as long as we accept what we know is wrong, then, slowly, the system will eat us up.

"When people cease to complain, they cease to think." I felt sad when the drama ended. Did I want to see bloodshed? Of course not. But I felt sad because as gallant as these soldiers were when they started, they all walked out with their heads bowed. And I know in my heart that the soldiers' grievances did not end there. I felt sad because I share their sentiments. But sadly, there is no proper forum, because the very people whom we are supposed to complain to are the same people who are committing the atrocities.

The spirit of Edsa I and Edsa II is long gone. And we will never capture it again. Why? Because we are the ones responsible for tainting that spirit. The politicians interviewed about the mutiny say that Oakwood was a wake-up call. But how many wake-up calls do we need? How many more young minds will be disillusioned with what they see in our government? If our country is in this kind of state, then we only have ourselves to blame.

—CANETH A. IDIOMA,
Joselito Street,
Daet, Camarines Norte

Justice for comfort women

THE WORLD commemorated last Aug. 15 the 58th anniversary of the end of World War II. Fifty-eight years since Japan formally surrendered to the Allied Forces. During Japan's more than three-year occupation in the Philippines, Japanese soldiers committed massive rape, theft, genocide and massacres. Millions of Filipino people suffered the heinous effects of war. Among these war crimes and crimes against humanity was the establishment of "comfort stations" and the drafting of approximately, according to historians, 1,000 Filipinas by the Japanese Imperial Army as "comfort women" who were detained and raped many times every day.

International laws and treaties recognize that the Japanese government should act on measures resolving crimes committed during World War II. The resolutions should include formal apology and state compensation to war victims. Despite moves by various organizations seeking justice for former "sex slaves," the Japanese government denies that it is obliged to pay damages. It maintains that according to existing laws and treaties, "individuals have no legal right to claim damages, and there is no other law that obliges the state to compensate."

Japan established in 1995 the Asian Women's Fund but the international movement for redress of war crimes of Japan does not accept it as a form of state compensation. Even the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights' resolution states, "the compensation (from the AWF) has not been deemed an acceptable measure."

The Filipino "comfort women," while in their advanced age, continuously protest over the Japanese government's continuing negligence of its post-war responsibilities, including that of the comfort women issue. The Lolas' Women in Black protest rallies aim to remind the Japanese government that only the prompt resolution of the comfort women issue will ensure the Japanese people's absolution of their war crimes to women and get them back to occupy a dignified and honorable place in the international community. While the Lolas cannot eternally wait for justice and mourn forever, as they die one by one, time is running out for Japan to atone for its war crimes.

—RECHILDA EXTREMADURA,
coordinator, Lila-Pilipina Inc.
(An organization of Filipino
Comfort Women),
49 Matimpiin St.,
Central District, Quezon City

SSS has no overdue PLDT account

THIS is regarding the article, "Gov't agencies owe P2B in telephone bills" (PDI, 8/8/03) quoting Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya as saying the Social Security System was among several government agencies which have been delinquent in paying a total of P52.8 million in telephone bills.

The SSS has not been remiss in paying its telephone bills. As of last month, the SSS has paid more than P26 million to PLDT.

We want to emphasize that these charges were mostly for data transmission and not as a result of "*telebabad*" or "*tsismis.*"

Our work requires us to communicate with our 169 branches, 153 in various parts of the country and 16 overseas. The calls and connections we make overseas or locally are necessary to facilitate the processing of benefits and loans.

The charges cover voice calls, online (Internet) usage, as well as data transmission through the network system which allows us to send and receive data from the SSS branches.

Our computer inquiry system is on a monthly leased line and huge amounts of data are transmitted regularly through a network. A big portion of communication expenses is for payment of the data lines.

According to our Network and Communications Department, the SSS has existing accounts that are for "reconciliation" with PLDT because of billing discrepancies.

—JOEL P. PALACIOS,
assistant vice president
for media affairs,
Social Security System
Diliman, Quezon City

Hold on, Mr. Defense Secretary

DESPITE the clamor for the ouster of Defense Secretary. Angelo Reyes, I believe he should not quit and President Macapagal-Arroyo should stand by him all the way.

It will be recalled that when Lt. (s.g) Antonio Trillanes IV was interviewed live Sunday morning, July 27, by Karen Davila of ABS-CBN, one of his original demands was for the ouster of President Macapagal whom he accused of being allegedly responsible for the Davao bombing. When Davila asked point blank who the junior officer had in mind to replace the President, Trillanes could not give any answer.

Since it is impossible for GMA to step down based simply on the basis of this unfounded allegation which is also being attributed to Reyes, there is no reason for Reyes to resign or be dismissed. Otherwise, both of them should go.

Reyes should not be made a sacrificial lamb to save the President. Perhaps, it would have been all right for intelligence chief Gen. Victor Corpus and PNP chief Hermogenes Ebdane to resign for the humiliating escape of Indonesian terrorist Fathur al-Ghozi. But if Reyes were to be dismissed because of the demands of mutinous junior officers, command responsibility dictates that the commander in chief should also be made accountable. Unless the defense chief is the mastermind of the mutiny just as when former Defense chief Juan Ponce Enrile was, for which he was dismissed by then President Aquino.

Under the present circumstance, Reyes has not been accused of disloyalty to GMA. In fact, he completely supports her all the way. President Macapagal should likewise stand by his defense chief all the way. Or both must go. The next constitutional successor is the Vice President.

—EDUARDO L. MONTENEJO,
43 Yacal Rd.,
Pilar Village, Las Piñas City

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AFP OFFICERS VILLAGE ASSOCIATION, INC.

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

August 1, 2003

Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President of the Republic of the Philippines
Malacañang, Manila

Dear Mrs. President:

We, the undersigned plead to Her Excellency, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for justice, compassion and give honor to the memory of your beloved father, Ex-President Diosdado Macapagal, the author of Proclamation No. 461. For the last 14 years, 658 active and retired officers of the AFP and the PNP who have been awarded lots in the AFP Officers Village in Fort Bonifacio, currently occupied by the Philippine Navy Golf Club (PNGC), have waited to take possession of their awarded lots. Their desperate plea to be allowed to occupy and develop their land have fallen on deaf and callous ears.

The PNGC's continuous occupation of the disputed area is based on a self-serving and misleading interpretation (its claim) that the golf course falls within the exclusionary clause of Presidential Proclamation 461 which provides that "Such part or parts of the area herein are declared open to disposition ... in relation to the provisions of the Public Land Act as are being used or earmarked for public or quasi-public purposes shall be excluded from such disposition." The above-cited argument is rendered untenable by a letter of the then Secretary of the DENR to Secretary Angelo Reyes stating that subject parcel of land belongs to us (lot awardee) with an appeal to turn-over same as soon as possible to underscore the Arroyo's government's sense of fairness and compassion to those who have given the best years of their lives serving the country.

The PNGC was originally established in 1978 as a recreational facility for the Philippine Navy personnel. It has since evolved into a private corporation whose members each pay a one-time fee of P50,000-65,000 as playing right plus monthly dues to be able to avail of its facilities. Obviously, it no longer functions for "public and quasi-public purposes" but caters to a paying clientele. None of its monthly gross revenue of about P2.8 million goes to the PN Trust Fund as required by law. It refuses to be audited by COA, a government entity nor does it pay appropriate income taxes to the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The golf club is raking in a fortune at the expense of 658 AFP Officers who are the awardees and rightful owners of the land it is squatting on.

Twenty (20) awardees/owners of lots within the golf course have died in the last few years. The golf club management can afford to continue to sit this case out and enjoy the profits that come from its illegal occupancy of AFPOVAI property. But when will justice come to the lawful awardees/owners? After time and natural attritition shall have decimated their ranks completely?

To the agencies concerned, the DND in particular, we beg you, do what is right for the claimants whose lives have been dedicated to the service to their country and people. To the PNGC management we say: Have a conscience. Return the property on which you are squatting on and from which you have amassed fortunes at the expense of the rightful owners, who have paid the realty taxes for their respective lot to the Municipality of Taguig (This can be verified with Taguig).

Why does SND not respect PP 461 and the right of 658 AFP Officers both active and retired. In the words of the late President Macapagal the least he (Macapagal) can do to honor these AFP Officers is to grant them a place to build their homes for giving the best part of their lives in service to country. However, Secretary Reyes ignored and continues to ignore the legacy of President Macapagal by disregarding the intent and purposes of PP 461. Sec. Reyes prefers to cater to about 200 military (golfers) and 300 + civilian golfers than to respect the rights of 658 AFP families to occupy the lots awarded them by DENR. This situation is a hindrance to the early realization of a strong republic.

Very truly yours,

BGEN [illegible] MANUEL AFP(Ret) MNSA
CAPT JESUS B DURIAN PN (RET)
COMMO HERNANITO P GABALES AFP (RET)
BY:
CAPT RONALD JESS S ALCUDIA, PA
BGEN JUAN B [illegible]BUA PAF(Ret)
MAJ Bernardo F Tabul
Capt. (PN) Narciso M. Liston
Domingo A. Calajate Commo AFP(Ret)
LTC ROLANDO N MILLADO PAF(Ret)
MAJ HERLYN ARRANGAN-SOLIS NC
MAJ GILBERT BARTOLOME - PAF
MAJ CARLOMAR O. CONCEPCION PAF
1LT EDGAR A. ALMARIO
COL [illegible] A Mojica (Ret)
CAPT CRISANTO [illegible]
COL BEN B BADIOLA (Ret)
CAPT JESUS E BIOLA (Ret.)
MAJ [illegible] E MONTALBO AFP (RET)
CAPT EDWIN MACAPAGAL REGINO PAF
COMMO NICANOR M HERNANDEZ PN (MNSA)
CAPT NORBERT MACAPAGAL REGINO PAF (deceased)
COL CESAR G JOSUE PAF (Ret)
Cdr Armando G Madamba PN(Ret.)
MAJOR JOSE JESUS S. ABEJO PAF
For Capt Leodigario V Macalintal - Mrs [illegible] V Macalintal
by Capt Loreto Odion
MAJ ROBERT B [illegible] (PAF)
for Ltc Mariano Antonio A. Perez - Mrs. [illegible] Perez
(Ret) [illegible]
MAJOR ARTEMIO D GRANADA PA (RET)
COL VICENTE L GUERZON JR PAF
COL ANDRES A DEVEZA DS(PAF) (Retired)
BGEN EDUARDO M FERNANDEZ AFP (RETIRED

Col Faustino [illegible] (VAG RET)
CDR JUAN ROMULO S MENDEZ PN
Phil Navy (Ret.)
COL MELCHOR A. QUERUBIN PAF (Ret)
Col Rogelio Apuyan
CAPT [illegible] MAGLONZO PN-Ret
CDR WILLIAM [illegible] PC
CDR HERM[illegible] NELSON C PC
[illegible]
BG ARTEMIO T BERMUDO
[illegible] C CARLMAGNO
COL STANLEY L. PAGDILAO (PAF) RET

[illegible] REMY JARENCIO
[illegible]
Col [illegible] (Ret)
[illegible] GARRIDO Jr AFP(Ret)
LTC GLORIOSO V MIRANDA (GSC) PA
[illegible] S. [illegible] PA(Ret)
CAPT AURELIO [illegible] PN(RET)
[illegible] (for Ltc. [illegible])
PSUP VICENTE S. [illegible]
CPT HERNANDO T NAVARRO JR PA
Police Superintendent Victoriano C. Davag
MAJ RODOLFO K. NORAL
National Commander, AFP National Reservist Association Inc
BRGEN VICENTE C. [illegible], AFP(Ret.)
CAPT. [illegible] (Ret. [illegible])
COL [illegible] PORTUGAL PAF (Ret)
COL PASTOR S [illegible]ZON PAF (Ret)
LTCOL [illegible] G [illegible]
LCDR ELEUTERIO B DUMAYAG PN
Col Jorge L. [illegible] (PA)
CPT DANIEL ALZAGA (PA)
Maj Jose R. Pardo (PA)
LTCOL [illegible] G [illegible] (PA RET)
BGEN CARLITO D DOMINGUEZ (RET) AFP
COL LUIS D CRUZ (RET) PC
EDGARDO B GALLOS COMMO AFP (Ret)
CPT [illegible] TABLIE - ORDENADO
by [illegible]
SSUPT ARTEMIO G. HICBAN
SSUPT MAYAMAN B MANGONDAYA PC(Ret)
SSUPT JOSE MARIO M. ESPINO
Lt Col [illegible] O [illegible] Ret/PA
LT COL SOLOMON C ADORNADO PAF
MGEN VICENTE C [illegible] (Ret)
LtCol GREGORIO R. CATAPANG PN(M)
COL VICENTE F. DESTAMPADOR (Ret)
For COL ARSENIO R. LAIGO (Ret)
LT [illegible] PN (Ret)
[illegible] H [illegible] PAF

ADVT

Jerusalem suicide blast kills 19; truce in crisis

AN INJURED Israeli girl is carried into a hospital by a rescue worker following an explosion in Jerusalem on Aug. 19. REUTERS

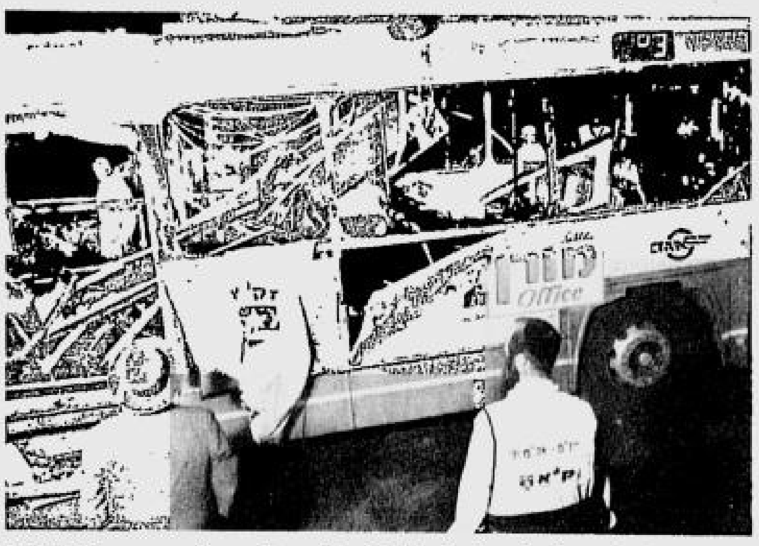
JERUSALEM—Israel clamped a tight security cordon around Palestinian areas Wednesday as it mulled its response to a massive suicide bomb that left US-backed peace efforts in their biggest crisis to date.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was to meet with ministers and security chiefs after freezing all contacts with the Palestinian Authority in the wake of the bus blast, which police said killed at least 18 people and the bomber.

His Palestinian counterpart, Mahmud Abbas, severed all contacts with the hardline groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which both claimed responsibility for the bloodiest attack in Israel since a double-suicide bombing in January.

The Israelis had been set to pull back from two West Bank towns but Tuesday night's bombing of a packed bus in an ultra-orthodox neighborhood of central Jerusalem prompted the Jewish state to tighten security instead.

"A general closure has been enforced (in the West Bank and Gaza Strip) during the night," an army spokesperson said.



ISRAELI paramedics and an ultra Orthodox Jew look at the bus where a suicide bomber blew himself up aboard in the Jewish neighborhood of Shmuel Hanavi in Jerusalem on Aug. 19. AFP

Israeli papers Wednesday registered shock at the latest attack, which killed several children, including an 18-month-old boy. Forty youngsters were among the 120 wounded, officials said.

The banner headline in the Maariv daily read "The Murder of the Children." Top-selling Yediot Aharonot summed up the attack with the words "Terror Returns to Jerusalem."

Sharon was due to meet Wednesday morning with army Chief of Staff Moshe Yaalon, the head of the domestic Shin Beth security service, Avi Dichter, and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz to consider the next move.

A senior government official said early Wednesday Sharon had decided to freeze all contacts with the Palestinian leadership as the attack had demonstrated Abbas' failure to deal with the men of violence.

"They (Abbas' government) have to decide whether they want peace with the terror organizations or with Israel. The pair do not go together," said the deputy director of the foreign ministry, Gideon Meir.

Industry minister Ehud Olmert said the Palestinians were facing a "moment of truth," while Justice Minister Tommy Lapid said Abbas and his security chief, Mohammad Dahlan, had to "begin without delay the battle against terrorist organizations."

The attack was carried out by a 25-year-old teacher from the West Bank town of Hebron who Palestinian security sources said was a member of Hamas and a former follower of Islamic Jihad. Both groups claimed responsibility for the attack. *AFP*

Blackout fears mount in Ontario

TORONTO—Fears of blackouts loomed over Ontario on Tuesday as electricity consumption rose, causing a dip into reserve levels of power, and higher temperatures this week threaten to keep alive the likelihood of rolling outages.

Power supplies in US cities, however, were fully recovered five days after the worst outage in North American history—which left 50 million people without power—with no further pleas in New York to conserve electricity.

Ontario Premier Ernie Eves again urged homes and businesses to lower demand and said most businesses would keep their electricity consumption cut in half on Wednesday, when the mercury is set to rise.

"I think if people are as diligent as they have been for the last two days we should be able to operate in the same manner tomorrow as we have today," Eves said.

But by late afternoon, power demand had crept up to nearly 19,200 megawatts across the province, about 1,000 MW above Monday's level. It eased to 18,880 MW as the workday finished.

A smog advisory is in effect for Wednesday and forecasters say high humidity will make the temperature feel like 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) on Thursday. *Reuters*

US: Paris has no business threatening Lockerbie deal

WASHINGTON—The United States on Tuesday lashed out at France for threatening to block a deal with Libya over the 1988 Lockerbie bombing, slamming its objections to the lifting of UN sanctions on Tripoli "last minute" and "extraneous.

In what US officials said was a preview of a blunt anti-French campaign being prepared in the event France does block the lifting of sanctions, the State Department said Paris had no business threatening the deal.

"We have made clear our deep concern over possible action by France or any other country that would impede a Pan Am 103 settlement," spokesperson Richard Boucher said, referring to the flight that blew up over Lockerbie, Scotland, on Dec. 21, 1988, killing 270 people, including 189 Americans.

He suggested that France's opposition to the removal of the sanctions—on the grounds that the Lockerbie families were getting a better monetary settlement from Libya than one given in 1999 to the families of those killed in the 1989 bombing of a French UTA airliner—was hypocritical.

Boucher pointed out that after that 1999 agreement, France had said it considered Libya to have fulfilled the UTA-related conditions for lifting the UN sanctions.

"I would note that in 1999 France advised the UN secretary general that Libya had met its Security Council requirements on the UTA bombing," he told reporters.

"We continue to support compensation for all victims of terrorism including the UTA families," he said. "At the same time we don't believe such efforts should impede the council's consideration of the Libya sanctions...

"Nor should the the Pan Am 103 families, who have waited so long for some measure of justice and closure, have their settlement threatened by extraneous last-minute factors," Boucher said.

A vote on a British-proposed resolution lifting the sanctions, which would trigger the payment of compensation to the Lockerbie families, is expected this week. *AFP*

A WOMAN takes a shower on the beach of Biarritz, southwestern France, Aug. 19. French opposition leaders demanded Tuesday a parliamentary investigation of the government's much-criticized response to a searing heat wave that have left up to 5,000 people dead. AP

Soul-searching in France over high heat wave toll

PARIS—Shamed by thousands of deaths, France is trying to answer why so many elderly people succumbed to a heat wave, some alone in sweltering city apartments, others in overwhelmed hospitals.

Critics have blamed families for deserting aging relatives while they went on holiday. But a retirement home director who lost five of her residents and other health care workers blamed the government for repeatedly cutting health care budgets for the swelling ranks of the elderly.

Opposition leaders demanded an inquiry into what they said was the center-right government's intolerably slow reaction to the health crisis sparked by the heat wave.

On Tuesday, Health Minister Jean-Francois Mattei ordered a swift report into what went wrong, a day after acknowledging as many as 5,000 people may have died in the heat—almost twice as many as previously estimated.

While scorching heat cooked much of Europe this month, no other country has reported a death toll even close to France's. But in neighboring Spain and Germany, there have been suggestions that figures could soar as official numbers are tallied.

At the Protestant Retirement Home of La Muette in Paris, where five people died earlier this month when temperatures topped 40 Celsius, some residents took their first strolls Tuesday in the garden, basking in 27 C temperatures.

Posters still hung on the walls urging residents to drink plenty of water.

The home has only five caretakers for 88 residents, and during the heat wave, assistant director Anne-Sophie Tene said she worked 15-hour days, spoon-feeding water to residents. Many others were hooked up to IVs. *AP*

Arnold launches damage control

LOS ANGELES—Movie hero Arnold Schwarzenegger summoned his economic war council to counter growing attacks on his political skills, as California's embattled governor appealed to voters to let him keep his job.

Gubernatorial candidate Schwarzenegger convened the first meeting of his high-powered Economic Recovery Council for Wednesday as he battles to dispel doubts he is the superhero needed to tackle California's deepening financial quagmire.

The actor and ex-body-builder will be joined by his chief economic and financial advisor, billionaire investor Warren Buffett and his other big-gun aide, former US secretary of state George Shultz at the meeting, summoned to signal that Schwarzenegger is finally ready to tackle substantive issues.

"They will deal with nuts and bolts economics issues and Schwarzenegger will then lay out his economic plans with press afterwards," said an aide to his campaign to become the state's next governor in special October 7 polls.

As part of the drive to quash charges that he is unable to grasp the intricacies of California's financial woes, the Republican also launched a TV advertising drive Tuesday to bolster his campaign.

But the 60-second spot failed to expose in any more detail his claimed plans for digging the golden state out of its $38-billion budget deficit, leaving him open to further charges that his campaign is based simply on movie-style sound bites and not on the real issues.

"I want to be the people's governor," the 56-year-old Austrian-born actor said in the ad.

"I stand for fiscally responsible government, rebuilding California's economic engine, putting the needs of children first and reforming our political system so that the public interest comes before special interests."

The target of Schwarzenegger's jibes, incumbent Gov. Gray Davis, meanwhile, also shifted his own campaign to stay in office into high gear with an impassioned appeal to voters not to strip him of power.

Speaking to supporters at the University of California at Los Angeles, the Democrat dismissed the early October recall vote to oust him as a right-wing plot aimed at hijacking the most populous and richest US state ahead of next year's presidential polls.

"This recall is bigger than California," he told cheering supporters, comparing the recall vote to Republican attempts to impeach former president Bill Clinton.

"What's happening here is part of an ongoing national effort by Republicans to steal elections they cannot win.

This is a fight worth making and I need your help. If you give me your help, I will do everything in my power over the next three and a half years to represent everyone in this great state—Democrats, Republicans and independents—and to give our children the future they deserve." *AFP*

Freed Sahara hostages leave Mali for Europe

BAMAKO—Tired but safe, 14 Europeans who spent several months as hostages in the Sahara desert after being seized in Algeria left Mali's capital Bamako late Tuesday for Cologne on a German army ambulance plane.

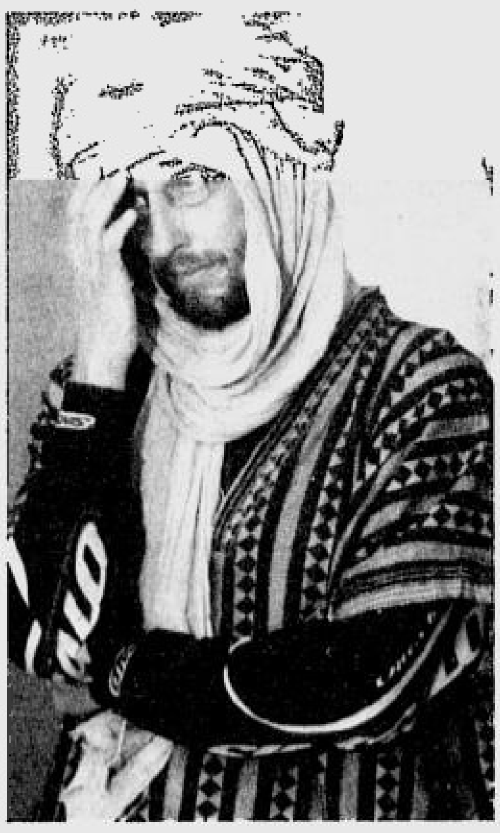
The ex-hostages, whose release had been announced Monday by the Mali presidency, started off with a long road journey from Tessalit in the northeastern Kidal region to the city of Gao in north Mali before taking a Transall German army aircraft for Bamako.

On their arrival in the capital the nine Germans, four Swiss and one Dutchman were received in the presidential building by head of state Amadou Toumani Toure who officially handed them over to their countries' authorities in the presence of the mediators who won their release.

The 14 tourists were expected to arrive in the west German city between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. Wednesday.

Messages of support and congratulations flooded in on Tuesday in Germany after the announcement of the freeing of the ex-hostages while relatives of the nine Germans held off celebrations until their return.

The German ARD public television channel said late Tuesday that Germany had paid a ransom of 4.6 million euros to the hostage-takers, quoting government sources as saying that the captors had originally demanded 45 million euros. *AFP*



GERMAN tourist Witold Mitko attends a ceremony at Mali's presidential palace on Aug. 19, after being released on Monday. REUTERS

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NPA claims killing 5 Army engineers

DAVAO CITY—The New People's Army yesterday said it killed five soldiers and wounded another military man in an ambush against members of the Army's 55th Engineering Brigade in Baganga, Davao Oriental on Tuesday.

Rigoberto Sanchez, spokesperson of the NPA's Merardo Arce Command, in a statement furnished reporters, said guerrillas belonging to the 2nd Pulang Bagani Company attacked the soldiers who were then "conducting combat support operation" in Sitio Kamamangan in Barangay Binondo.

Sanchez said one soldier had also been wounded.

The military's Civil Relations Group (CRG) for Southeastern Mindanao based in Camp Panacan confirmed there was a clash between soldiers and rebels in Baganga on Tuesday afternoon.

However, it said no casualty had been reported as of press time.

The CRG said the encounter took place while Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, Environment Secretary Elizea Gozun, and Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman were visiting Mt. Diwata in nearby Monkayo town in Compostela Valley.

Sanchez identified the slain soldiers as MSgt. Oscar Andale, sergeants Orlando Monton and Vicente Felias, Pfc. Bayan Guiamad and Pfc. Willy Manlana.

Wounded was Pfc. Abdul Nasser Kamid. Sanchez said the attacking rebels also recovered two M16 Armalite rifles from the battle scene.

Sanchez said the ambush on the Army engineers was justified because they have been providing not only infrastructure support but also intelligence information against the NPA.

He said Army engineers would also conduct combat missions.

In Naga City, Camarines Sur police director Senior Supt. Roberto Rongavilla has raised a warning against the NPA's "agaw-armas" (snatching of firearms) operations.

This special operations of the NPA rebels is in progress, Rongavilla warned all security guards and armed government personnel.

He raised the alert after investigators got the information from a confession of a 19-year-old suspect who shot dead and took away a .38-caliber revolver of a security guard of Mercury Drug Store on Saturday.

Rongavilla said Ely Portezo, the slain drugstore security guard, was the second victim of the busted "agaw-armas" operation team. He said another security guard working at a Family Savings Bank here, Rolando Nato, was also shot dead on Aug. 12.

Last Sunday, three suspected NPA members shot dead Chief Insp. Loreto Tablizo, deputy provincial director of Catanduanes. *Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau and Juan Escandor, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Cops trying to get Al-Ghozi from military custody

COTABATO CITY—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front on Tuesday maintained its earlier claim that Indonesian fugitive Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi had been recaptured but was being hidden by the military.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said they have reliable information that the military got the self-confessed Jemaah Islamia member even before the July 27 Oakwood mutiny.

Earlier, former Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Alunan Glang claimed Al-Ghozi was being hidden somewhere in the boundaries of the two Lanao provinces.

For the nth time however, the military categorically denied it has custody of the country's most wanted person.

Armed Forces chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya said the claims have been muddling government's efforts to clamp on Al-Ghozi.

"This is already giving national embarrassment. I am categorically denying the MILF claim that the most wanted man was in Army custody and being kept in Lanao provinces," Abaya said in a radio interview.

Glang said the military's effort to keep Al-Ghozi's arrest a secret was obviously aimed at derailing the peace process.

He said the military wants the public to believe the Indon bomber was still at large and has been hiding inside MILF territories so that attacks on the rebel group could be justified.

Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko has repeatedly said that the military would pursue Al-Ghozi "even if he goes to MILF identified areas."

Kyamko said on the contrary, that the military has been receiving consistent reports that Al-Ghozi is already in the hands of the MILF, particularly in Kabuntalan, Maguindanao.

Last week, President Macapagal-Arroyo flew to Kabuntalan to oversee the military operations there.

No Al-Ghozi was arrested but she said the operation would continue.

Kabuntalan Mayor Susan Samad said she did not know where the military got its information about Al-Ghozi's alleged presence in her town.

Kabalu said among the information they got was that the police was trying to "ransom" the fugitive Indon from his military keepers.

"The police wants to clear its name but the military would not budge," he said.

Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

SKYLAB JOSELLE BADILLA/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

People from Barangay Kioya, Sibagat, Agusan del Sur enjoy their P25-downhill ride on a "skylab," the only means of transportation in this barangay. It can accommodate eight persons including the driver.

Shellfish ban lifted in Bolinao, Pangasinan

DAGUPAN CITY—The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources has lifted the ban on eating, gathering and harvesting of shellfish from the waters of Bolinao and Anda towns.

An advisory issued by BFAR Director Malcolm Sarmiento said shellfish harvested from the towns are now safe for human consumption after BFAR tests showed that shellfish collected there were found negative for the red tide toxin.

The BFAR advisory was issued on July 14 but its copy was given to the provincial government only on July 29. The provincial government forwarded the advisory to the Dagupan City government on Aug. 8.

The city government prevented the selling of shellfish gathered from Bolinao and Anda since the ban was declared on April 15.

Results of BFAR's three consecutive weeks of sampling revealed that paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) toxic levels in the shellfish such as oyster and green mussels (*tahong*) harvested from Anda and Bolinao were below the regulatory level of 40 microgram/100 grams of shellfish meat, Sarmiento said.

But BFAR continues to monitor the coastal waters of Pangasinan to safeguard public health and to protect the fishery industry, he said.

Bolinao Mayor Jesus Celeste said the lifting of the ban was a welcome development for the residents who depend on the shellfish gathering and trade for livelihood.

Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Comelec proclaims mayor of Negros Occidental town

BACOLOD CITY—The Municipal Board of Canvassers has finally proclaimed the winning mayor of E.B. Magallona town, Negros Occidental, two years after the 2001 elections.

Mayor Alfonso Gamboa has only 10 months to serve out of the three-year term he was elected to.

But for Gamboa, the little time left does not matter as he called on the people to bury past differences and work together.

"If everybody pulls together, 10 months is already a long time but if we quarrel with each other, 10 months is very, very short," he said.

Gamboa was declared winner in the mayoral race during the resumption of the canvassing of votes at the Sangguniang Bayan session hall in E.B. Magallona town, 23.9 km north of here.

He won by 196 votes. He garnered 9,485 votes while his opponent Reynaldo Depasucat Jr. had 9,289 votes.

The canvassing of votes was stopped in 2001 when Depasucat filed a pre-proclamation protest, questioning the election returns of 23 precincts.

Gamboa was leading in the counting of votes when the canvassing was stopped.

The Commission on Elections *en banc* later dismissed the pre-proclamation protest of Depasucat. The candidate then filed a petition for certiorari before the Supreme Court, questioning the poll body's ruling.

On July 29, the High Tribunal dismissed Depasucat's petition for lack of merit. The poll body then ordered Victor Garbone, Comelec director in Western Visayas, to convene the E.B. Magallona BOC and resumed the canvassing of votes.

The BOC chaired by Comelec regional legal officer Dennis Ausan convened at 10:20 a.m. on Tuesday in the presence of a battery of lawyers from the Depasucat and Gamboa camps.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Another hard-hitting radioman gunned down in Laguna

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—'*May tama ako. Dalian nyo, dalhin nyo ko sa* hospital' (I'm shot. Hurry up. Rush me to the hospital)," thus recounted Jocelyn, the wife of Noel Villarante, a hard-hitting local columnist and radio broadcaster who was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in front of his house in Barangay Duhat this town.

Jocelyn was unable to bring her husband to the hospital as the gunmen approached the bloodied Villarante and pumped two more shots into his body.

Villarante, 34, is a hard-hitting columnist of local newspaper The Laguna Score and also a reporter for community radio station dzJV based in Calamba City, said Calabarzon police director Chief Supt. Jaime Caringal.

Accounts said Villarante had just arrived home from his work at around 6:30 p.m. After changing his clothes he went out to get something from his pickup van parked outside his house.

Moments later, a lone gunman alighted from a white Mitsubishi Adventure with no plate number and fired at the victim, hitting him once at his chest. Two other suspects served as look out, police said.

Villarante was able to run inside their house and sought help from his wife and brother-in-law.

"I heard a gunshot so I immediately looked outside of our house. I was shocked when I saw my husband with blood all over his shirt. He was calling for help.

They tried to approach Villarante to bring him to a nearby hospital but another volley of gunshots greeted them on their way out. Afraid that they would also be killed, they ran inside the house, leaving the victim lying in front of their store.

"I saw the gunman running towards us. I was so afraid. They were heartless. They came back to ensure my husband was dead," Jocelyn lamented.

As the victim was lying with his face on the floor, the suspect pumped two more bullets in his head, killing the broadcaster instantly.

Town police chief Senior Supt. Renato Paras said they were cautious in giving details about the case as he said some big personalities could be behind the killing.

But he assured the victim's family that they would do everything to solve the case as soon as possible.

"He didn't tell me anything about death threats. He was a good man. I don't have any idea why they have to kill him," Jocelyn said.

She disclosed that her husband had a heated telephone conversation with provincial board members Rolando Bagnet and a certain board member named Tapia regarding Villarante's crusade against corruption in the province, days prior to the killing.

Sources close to the victim said politics and issues on drugs could be the reason for Villarante's dreadful end.

A source who declined to be identified said Villarante liked to write about alleged graft practices and other illegal activities of local government and police officials.

The event came as a shock to the local media after national police officials admitted spying on some newsmen.

The Police Regional Office 4 (PRO4) Press Corps condemned the killing and urged the police officials to quickly get the suspects and mastermind of the gruesome murder of their colleague.

"This is really a big blow to freedom of the press. I just hope no police and local officials are behind the murder," PRO4 press corps president Noel Alamar said.

Alamar said they are alarmed over the spate of killings of media people in Southern Tagalog. This came after broadcaster Apolinario Pobeda's killing in Lucena City a few months ago has not reached its conclusion yet.

Villarante is said to be the public information officer of Laguna Vice Gov. Dan Fernandez.

The INQUIRER tried to contact Fernandez but his secretary said he was out on official function. *Marlon Ramos and Fausto Tatad, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Live bomb found

NAGA CITY—Curiosity led a police officer to discover a live airborne-type bomb, commonly used by combat helicopters, among the junks in a pushcart of a small-time junk buyer on Friday. SPO4 Armando Cabrera was on the way to his assignment when two arguing men beside a pushcart full of junks caught his attention. When Cabrera looked at the pushcart, he told them it was a bomb. For fear that they would be made to answer for the bomb, the two men ran away leaving the police alone with the bomb that he turned over to the police station. SPO4 Lorna Fernandez, of the central police station, said the bomb is a "fuse rocket dummy" with September 1952 etched on its cylinder as date of manufacture. Police have yet to send bomb experts to determine the quality of the bomb.

Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Girl's body found

MAMBURAO, Occidental Mindoro—Police found the decomposing body of an eight-year-old girl, who had been reported missing since Aug. 13, on the seashore of Barangay Tayamaan. Initial investigation by the Mamburao medico legal staff revealed that the victim, Alfie Cajayon, a Grade 3 pupil of Tayamaan Elementary School had been raped and tortured before she was killed. Insp. Edwin Gutang said the girl was selling rice cakes every morning before going to school, on the same shore, a few meters away from where her body was dug up. Police arrested four suspects who were identified by witnesses to have been watching Alfie before she disappeared. They are Willy de Jose, 22, and his brother Chrius, 21, both residents of Tayamaan, and their houseguests Leoterio Victoriano, 22, and Norbert Tesorio, 18. They were all single and jobless.

Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Car accident

MATNOG, Sorsogon—A Philtranco bus with plate number BVJ 641 fell into a riverbank Tuesday at KM 664, Maharlika Highway in Barangay Manjumlad. The accident resulted to the death of driver Ricardo Mora and injuries to the passengers, police said. Matnog police were dispatched to the site of the accident to prevent looting and for recovery operation.

Emir Gamis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Fire razes school

PILAR, Sorsogon—Fire gutted five rooms of the Tinco National High School in Barangay Inapugan were gutted on Sunday. Witnesses claimed that the firemen failed to control the fire as it spread rapidly and was aggravated by strong winds.

Emir Gamis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Woman dies in blast

CEBU CITY—A woman was killed while two others were seriously injured in a dynamite explosion in a shell craft shop in San Roque, Talisay City last Aug. 7. Killed was Jesse Paerez, 34, of San Roque. Wounded were Junefer Padillo, 32; and Antonio Helido, 52, both of San Roque. The three worked at the shellcraft shop, which the police believed is a front for the illegal manufacture of blasting caps, commonly used for dynamite fishing. Shop owner Rino Lanit was investigated for possible filing of criminal charges. The explosion destroyed a makeshift shop located in front of Lanit's residence and shattered the glass windows of at least two nearby houses. Police recovered 16 finished products of blasting caps from Lanit's house and several wicks intended for the blasting caps at the blast site.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

Bonnet gang hunt

BACOLOD CITY—The Land Transportation Office has deployed personnel to conduct checkpoints and assist the police in hunting down members of the "bonnet gang" who were believed responsible for the abduction of young women in Bacolod City. Chief Insp. Roderick Augustus Alba, Bacolod City Police Office, said he had met with traffic enforcers so they could help the police monitor the suspects. Senior Supt. Edgar Esparagoza, deputy police director, said a special task force was formed to monitor and apprehend the gang members. The police had recorded seven cases of abduction involving young girls since May. The victims were forced into the van, stripped of their clothes and released unharmed.

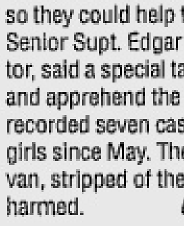
Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Chinoy donates land

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A wealthy Filipino-Chinese businessman prevented the possible ejection of a public high school from his lot when he signed a deed of donation with education officials. Johnny Ang, owner of the Bibiana Livestock Farms, in his conditional deed of donation, said the Katangawan National High School could continue occupying his 1.9 hectares of land provided it would be used for educational purposes only. Jubilant education officials honored Ang by renaming the school after him. From Katangawan National High School, it will now be called the Johnny Ang National High School.

Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Countdown for Justice



WAPILE

IT is exactly 465 days today since Pagadian journalist Edgar Damalerio was slain in cold blood. The principal suspect, police officer Guillermo Wapile, remains at large after escaping while in the custody of the police.

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Trailblazing people power in Naga City's governance

Naga City People's Coun

THE NAGA City People's Council, composed of more than a hundred duly accredited NGOs and POs, is represented in all the city government bodies and standing committees, including those of the Sangguniang Panlungsod. NCPC

By Gabriel Hidalgo Bordado
Contributor

ON THE EVE of the 20th anniversary of the martyrdom of her husband, former Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, former President Corazon C. Aquino formally launched the "People Power People Movement" highlighting 20 programs chosen (through a nationwide screening process) for giving flesh and substance to the relatively amorphous concept known as "people power."

Early this month, Ms Aquino was quoted as saying that the characteristic traits of people power include love of country, selflessness as well as readiness to help fellow Filipinos and that the "People Power People Movement" will commemorate the 20th death anniversary of her martyred husband because "she wants to do something more enduring than the usual annual anniversary activities."

A case in point is the People Empowerment Program of Naga City.

The program may well revolutionize local governance. Indeed, where else in the Philippines can non-government organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs) directly participate in running the affairs of a local government unit?

It's only in Naga City where "people power" has long been institutionalized. In fact, last year, President Macapagal-Arroyo conferred the Gawad Galing Pook 2002 to the city in recognition of its trailblazing program.

"We are proud of the fact that Naga City is an acknowledged center of innovations in local governance. At the core of such innovations is a program encouraging both partnership and participation," Mayor Jesse M. Robredo, recipient of the 2000 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Government Service, stated in a paper titled "Community Participation and People Empowerment in Naga City."

Robredo conceptualized the People Empowerment Program way back in 1989, right after issuing an executive order proclaiming Naga as a "zone of peace, freedom and neutrality." It would, however, take more than half a decade before the program could be institutionalized and fully implemented.

In 1995, then Councilor Jaime Jacob (who would also become a congressman and undersecretary of education) came up with a proposed ordinance declaring the Naga City government open to partnership with duly accredited Naga-based NGOs and POs.

"The proposed ordinance is an attempt at the political empowerment of the Nagueño. Ideally, it should have originated purely as the Nagueño's demand. Its subsequent enactment would then but merely complete and seal the whole process. As it is, however, with the city government as co-initiator, the process will have to end with the Nagueño's acceptance of and readiness for a new democratic order," Jacob stated in his explanatory note.

Mandates

Jacob claimed that in drafting the proposed ordinance, he had to conduct a series of consultations with the NGOs and POs operating in the city, spelling out in the process what he called its three main mandates, to wit:

- the establishment of a structure to achieve partnership between the Naga City government and the people of Naga in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of government policies, projects and activities;
- almost full implementation of the Local Government Code provisions on sectoral representation; and
- the hastening of the organization of the people directly through the joint efforts of a people's council and the city government to address the people's sectoral and collective concerns with minimal government intervention.

Resistance

As expected, the proposed ordinance had a very rough sailing at the Sangguniang Panlungsod (SP) with some of its conservative members expressing fears (largely unfounded) that the NGOs and POs would eventually ease them out in running the affairs of the city government.

By the end of 1995, however, the SP finally approved what would be known as the People Empowerment Ordinance, paving the way for the creation of the Naga City People's Council (NCPC), the first of its kind in the country.

Today, the NCPC, composed of more than a hundred duly accredited NGOs and POs, has been actively fulfilling its role as an equal partner of the Naga City government in the development process. It is, in fact, represented in all city government bodies, "observing, voting and participating in the deliberation, conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of projects, activities and programs of the city government."

Positive change

As noted by Robredo himself, "a positive change in perception and attitude of the civil society towards the city government and vice versa has been effected and the ubiquitous presence of the NCPC has promoted greater transparency, engendering an atmosphere of mutual trust and encouraging the city government, to blaze new trails in information openness."

Of course, implementing the People Empowerment Program of Naga City has not been that easy.

Problems and difficulties abound, as borne out by the rapid field appraisal conducted a year ago by lawyer Soliman Santos Jr., an independent consultant who was once the executive director of the Quezon City-based Institute of Politics and Governance.

Among other things, Santos believes that "in a sense, the NCPC should see itself as an interim NGO-PO council working to transform itself into a true people's council in terms of organized constituency, coherent agenda, and proactive intervention in city affairs."

Be that as it may, the program has made its mark and as predicted by Jacob, "politics and governance in Naga will never be the same again but change will be for the better."

THE AUTHOR is now on his third term as Naga City councilor. Prior to his stint at the city council, he edited the weekly Bicol Express and the Naga City Journal.

'Participatory' process appraised

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Naga City

MEMBERS of the Naga City People's Council (NCPC), an alliance of accredited non-government and people's organizations, the media and this city's mayor applauded former President Cory's congratulatory remarks on the city's practice of participatory decision-making in governance.

In the last quarter of 2001, the United Nations Development Program sent a consultant to look into the actual practices in the operation and administration of the city's LGU.

From a focused group discussion with key government personnel involved in day-to-day affairs of executive departments and the members of the NCPC, UNDP consultant Benjamin Albarece, Ph. D., was able to obtain information manifesting transparency in government acquisition and project biddings.

Albarece also noted the regularity and active involvement of the NCPC in the deliberations of the city council.

"It does not matter that the practices in local governance are still at (an) infant stage. What matters is that these practices have been introduced into the system," the UNDP consultant observed.

Perceptions

But perceptions in Naga City of the much-lauded empowerment ordinance and practice of participatory democracy are mixed.

In 2001, Mayor Robredo contracted lawyer Soliman Santos Jr., an active civil society advocate, to conduct a rapid appraisal of the impact of the 1995 empowerment ordinance.

The key informants were composed of the local media, sectors and individuals outside the city government structures, and direct participants inside the city government structures and accredited NGOs and POs who were members of deliberating bodies.

Soliman's rapid appraisal document, which he submitted to Robredo for comments early last year, showed contradictory perceptions on how the principles of the empowerment ordinance and existence of the NCPC made an impact.

Key informants from inside the city government and NCPC said there is great potential in the participatory democracy practices.

However, observers from outside the city government hardly showed awareness and understanding of the basic concepts of the empowerment ordinance.

A significant number of key informants do not recognize the NCPC, the group entrusted with promoting and defending civil society interests and concerns.

Santos interpreted that the empowerment ordinance itself and the role of the NCPC in achieving its goals barely touched the consciousness of a large segment of the city's general public.

A key informant from the local media defined the lack of awareness and understanding of the empowerment ordinance and NCPC in practice as "a good story that has not been ventilated and discussed."

Another key informant has declared that the fact that there were "no significant articles or discussions, in terms of quantity, is in itself a manifestation that the NCPC is an insignificant entity."

Tayabas' Dagatan lake, a wilderness sanctuary

By, Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Tayabas, Quezon

ENVIRONMENTALISTS and nature lovers call the Dagatan lake, a two-hectare elliptical lake some 200 meters above sea level, as the "last paradise in the horizon" owing to its pristine cool waters.

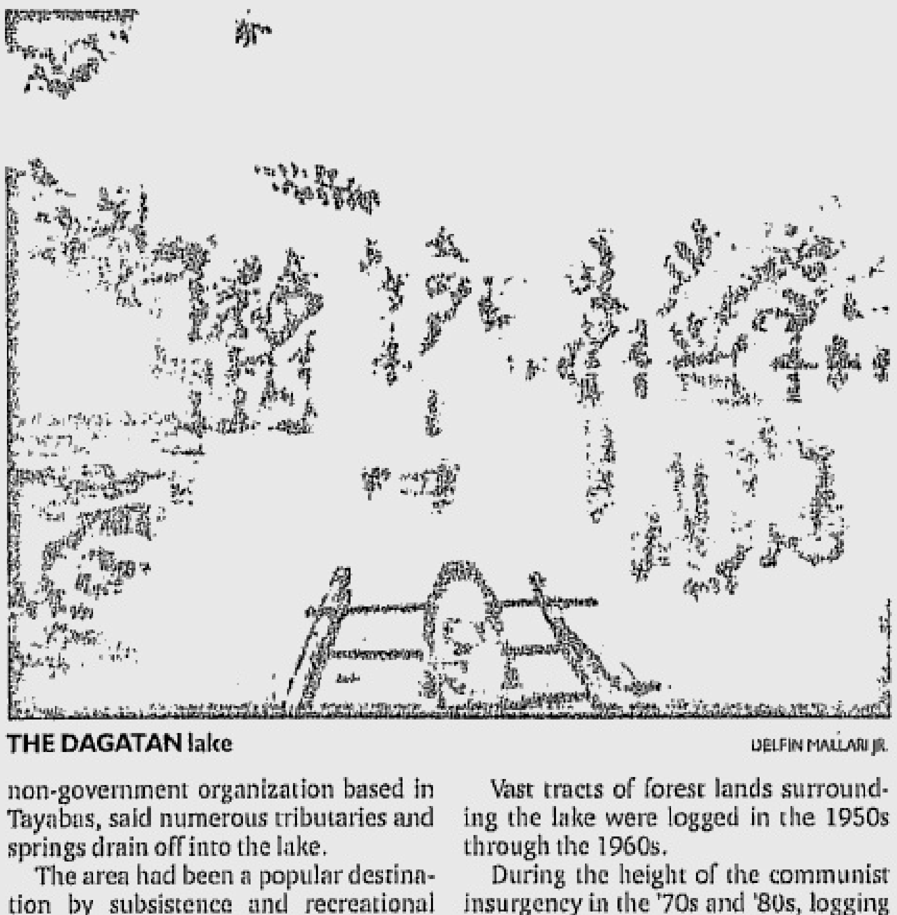
It is found in a secluded corner of Barangay Ibabang Palale near the boundary of Mauban and Tayabas towns, some 300 kilometers south of Manila.

So clear is the water that one could see branches of fallen trees that lay under water for years. If one hears a sudden splash, a quick glance in the direction could provide a glimpse of a big eel gracefully gliding below.

Surrounded by thick verdant vegetation on rolling limestone hills, the lake can be reached after a strenuous six-hour walk inside coconut farmlands from the nearest road.

A researcher said the lake could have volcanic origins because it is near the Mainit Springs and the mystical Mt. Banahaw, a dormant "vulcan de agua."

A study conducted by Kabanahaw, a non-government organization based in Tayabas, said numerous tributaries and springs drain off into the lake.



THE DAGATAN lake DELFIN MALLARI JR.

The area had been a popular destination by subsistence and recreational hunters for quite a long time, the study shows.

Vast tracts of forest lands surrounding the lake were logged in the 1950s through the 1960s.

During the height of the communist insurgency in the '70s and '80s, logging activities were reportedly stopped by New People's Army guerrillas, providing the needed break for the forest to restore to its natural condition.

"There are still remaining wide green forests that could provide sanctuary for both terrestrial and aquatic inhabitants in the area," said Jay Lim, Tanggol Kalikasan-Southern Tagalog community coordinator, as he led a group of journalists during one of the sojourns in environmentally critical hotspots.

"But that would not last if the manifested resurgence of illegal logging goes on unabated. We all need to act fast to save the virgin condition of Dagatan lake and her surroundings," he quickly added.

Residents in the area said illegal loggers have again been frequenting the place and were beginning to cut trees.

Lim said the preservation of the lake is considered crucial as a potential source of potable water in the light of the United Nation's declaration of 2003 as the "Year of Freshwater."

The UN aims to increase people's awareness of the significance of sustainable freshwater use, management and protection. Making Dagatan lake a potential sustainable source is a challenge," he said.

Big freshwater eels abound in the crystal-clear lake, aside from the abundance of catfish, mudfish and tilapia.

The farmers in the area said freshwater fish helps tide them over during lean months and non-harvest season.

"Wealthy freshwater fish aficionados from the town usually place their orders during weekend, especially for eels, maybe for their visitors from Manila," said a resident living near the lake.

The presence of different kinds of bird species in the area was also recorded, so with the rich fauna and flora that was endemic in the place.

Romeo Cariaga, Tayabas municipal environment and natural resources officer, said the local government has been exerting efforts on government agencies concerned to declare Dagatan lake as a natural reserve and wilderness sanctuary.

Based on the revised Tayabas land-use map, Dagatan lake has already been declared as a "conservation zone."

Such move, Kabanahaw said, was designed to prohibit the incursion of development projects, which could threaten the rich flora and fauna in the area.

The barangay officials of Ibabang Palale have also been conducting consultations and ethno-mapping sessions within the community in preparation for an environmental forum towards the preservation of Dagatan lake.

Graft charges filed vs 5 top gov't officials

From page A1

man, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group of the Philippine National Police, the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission, and nongovernment organizations.

"All the documents accompanying the complaint are certified true copies," he said. "Our men really took the trouble to go out in the provinces to obtain these documents."

But Pleyto denied that he had misdeclared P16 million in assets and pieces of property owned by him and his immediate relatives.

He said he had fully declared his assets in his Statements of Assets and Liabilities and paid taxes of P222,022 last year for his property.

Valera, an Ateneo Law School graduate and 1983 Bar topnotcher, said the accusation against him was "baseless" and a product of the "snake pit" at the Palace.

A licensed customs broker who had a stint in a shipping firm before transferring to the BOC as deputy commissioner, Valera denied that he had financial interest in a brokerage firm, which supposedly entered into a compromise deal that resulted in uncollected revenues of P14.7 million.

"That is not true . . . They cannot present any evidence that I am the owner of a brokerage firm... They should put up or shut up," he said in a phone interview.

He said the investigators could have gotten their facts mixed up and could have been referring to the Cactus Cargo System.

Maglipon, BOC deputy collector, likewise said all the charges against him were not true.

"I have shown them all the evidence ... Everything has been explained," he said. "*May naiinggit lang siguro sa akin* (Maybe someone's envious)."

'Very glaring'

Assistant Ombudsman Ernesto M. Nocos said the cases against the five officials would now go to the Ombudsman's Preliminary Investigation and Monitoring Office, which would then endorse it to the Fact-Finding Investigation Team.

"We are giving priority to these cases," Nocos said, noting the stature of those involved. He said the government also wanted to show its seriousness in fighting graft.

Indicating the evidence gathered against the respondents, Nocos said the element of graft appeared to be "very glaring."

He said that if there were strong ground for the issuance of suspension orders on the respondents, the Ombudsman would not hesitate to do so.

But Pleyto said he bought his 384-sq-m lot on Congressional Avenue, Quezon City—now worth P2,630,000—at a cost of P36,000 in 1976. He said it took him three years to pay for the loan that he took out to buy it.

He said that in 1979, he took out another loan and used the same property to put up businesses, including a lending firm and a piggery farm that supplied markets and hotels. It took him 10 years to completely pay for that loan, he said.

He also said he still had P10,828,566 in loans that he had been using to finance his businesses, run mostly by his wife Miguela.

"I have lending and pawnshop businesses. That's why we were able to acquire small pieces of real estate," Pleyto told the INQUIRER. "People who cannot pay us their debt end up selling their land to us. The others are foreclosed in our favor."

As for the trips that he supposedly made, he said he only had nine. He said he started going abroad only in 1995, after being in service for 29 years.

'Why am I persecuted?'

Valera said he was able to help the government collect P37 million from Steel Asia, a firm that had earlier paid "in good faith" but was issued bogus tax credit certificates.

The firm had wanted to pay staggered monthly payments but was prevailed upon to accelerate these.

"I was able to help the government collect 100 percent the P37 million from Steel Asia. I should be congratulated and not persecuted," Valera said, after faxing documents concerning the case, which was filed before a Manila court and the Office of the Ombudsman.

Valera said he had initiated a campaign against smugglers and was able to successfully prosecute other cases. He said these resulted in huge revenues for the government during his tenure at the BOC, which started in August 2001.

Asked what could have prompted authorities to order the filing of the graft charge against him, Valera said: "I filed 130 cases worth about P8 billion. Those are big losses for [smugglers]. I even attached their property... I have risked my life in going against smugglers... I wanted to make a difference."

He expressed the belief that people in the government were being used to demolish one another, apparently in preparation for the 2004 polls.

Valera said that his post as deputy commissioner was "juicy," and that some people in Malacañang, the Department of Finance and other agencies wanted it for themselves.

"The President doesn't know this. There is a cordon sanitaire around her," he said.

'Unfair'

Maglipon said the charge against him was "unfair."

"It was published ... as if I'm guilty already," he said.

He reiterated that he owned a house and lot in Pasig even before he entered the BOC, and that the other lots were owned by his daughters and one by his brother-in-law, Dr. Danilo Ablan, who had a lucrative practice in the United States.

He also said he acquired his firearms when he was still working for the Makati government as market administrator and also as a customs police officer.

'Not me'

In San Fernando, Pampanga, acting Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez denied that he had furnished the Transparency Group documents on Pleyto's alleged unexplained wealth.

Soriquez told reporters that contrary to Pleyto's allegations on radio on earlier yesterday, his office gave only copies of Pleyto's Form 201 and SALs upon the Palace's request.

Pleyto, whose recent annual salary amounted to P346,500, declared a net worth of P4.5 million and P5.9 million in his SALs for 2001 and 2002, respectively.

According to the Transparency Group, Pleyto had undeclared real property worth P16.6 million.

Soriquez also lamented that Pleyto had linked the lifestyle check to the secretary's supposed efforts to fight off an impending suspension by the Office of the Ombudsman.

The case is in connection with Soriquez's liability for the alleged faulty construction of the transverse dike of the FVR Megadike in Bacolor, Pampanga, in 1996. ***With a report from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Stop dining with contractors in 5-star hotels, DPWH staff told

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Acting Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez has laid down a policy to personnel: Stop dining or meeting with contractors in expensive restaurants and hotels.

Soriquez, who has worked at the Department of Public Works and Highways for 41 years, starting out as a laborer, said the practice of contractors treating DPWH officials or employees to meals in posh places had been going on "since time immemorial."

But the practice is inappropriate, he said, adding: "If contractors have to meet us about their problems, it has to be in our offices."

However, a DPWH employee who retired three years ago said that was how the "game" was played.

It is during meetings outside the DPWH offices that officials negotiate for, demand, or receive their share of a contract's public funds, the source said.

Soriquez said the Office of the Ombudsman and the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission were in the course of investigating corrupt officials and personnel in his department.

Asked if he had the moral ascendancy to rid the DPWH of corruption, he replied in the affirmative and pointed out that the worth of his assets was below P2 million.

Rebel Marines prefer stitching ...

From page A1

Don't laugh but they are into cross-stitching, cooking and music.

"They (are) enjoy(ing) their life inside the stockade . . . They take their detention good naturedly," Maj. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio, commandant of the Marines Corps, yesterday told the INQUIRER.

He said some soldiers spend their time cross-stitching, while others cook. Some have requested for guitars and a videoke.

Teodosio said the military granted the request of the mutineers for cooking utensils and handicraft materials because "we just want to prepare their future."

"We are no longer sure about their military career, so while awaiting their fate, they can start exploring their hidden skills," he said in a serious tone.

When asked about the unusual pastime of the mutineers, Teodosio said the soldiers would probably "stay inside the stockade rather than be assigned at Kalayaan Island" as a form of punishment for their participation in the failed uprising.

Life in the Kalayaan Island Group is worse than being in detention, according to Teodosio.

"There, they are exposed to extremely hard conditions—no water, no electricity, food is scarce, communication is impossible," he said.

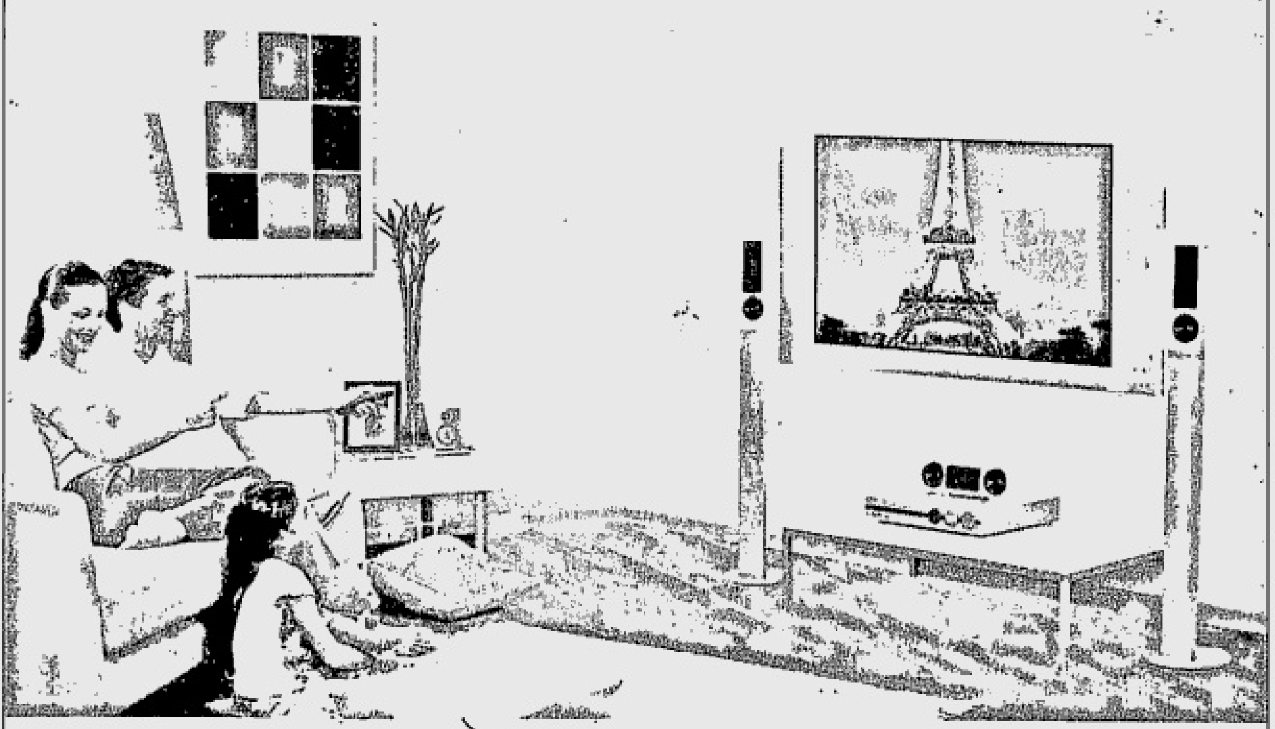
In their detention cells, the mutineers could have fun by exploring their other skills, Teodosio said.

At least 98 Marine soldiers and officers are being detained at the Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio while awaiting the results of the court-martial proceedings against them.

"They have already accepted their fate and they are willing to face the consequences," he said.

To cushion the impact of their detention, Teodosio said he was renaming the Marine stockade to "the Kalayaan."

"So that when their children are asked, they could say their fathers have been reassigned to Kalayaan," he said.



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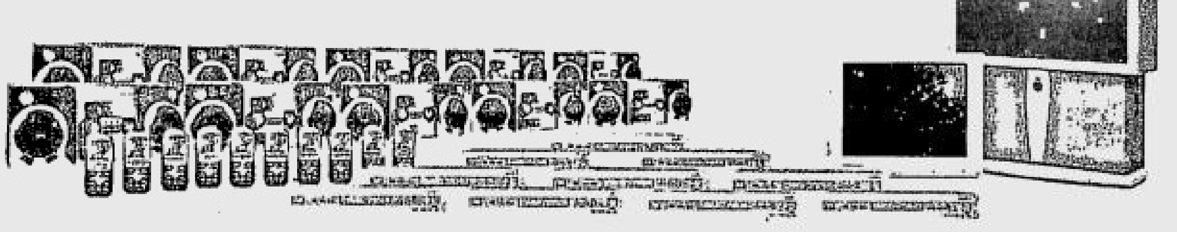
SWITZERLAND
THE BEST OF EUROPE
PROMO
GERMANY
HOLLAND



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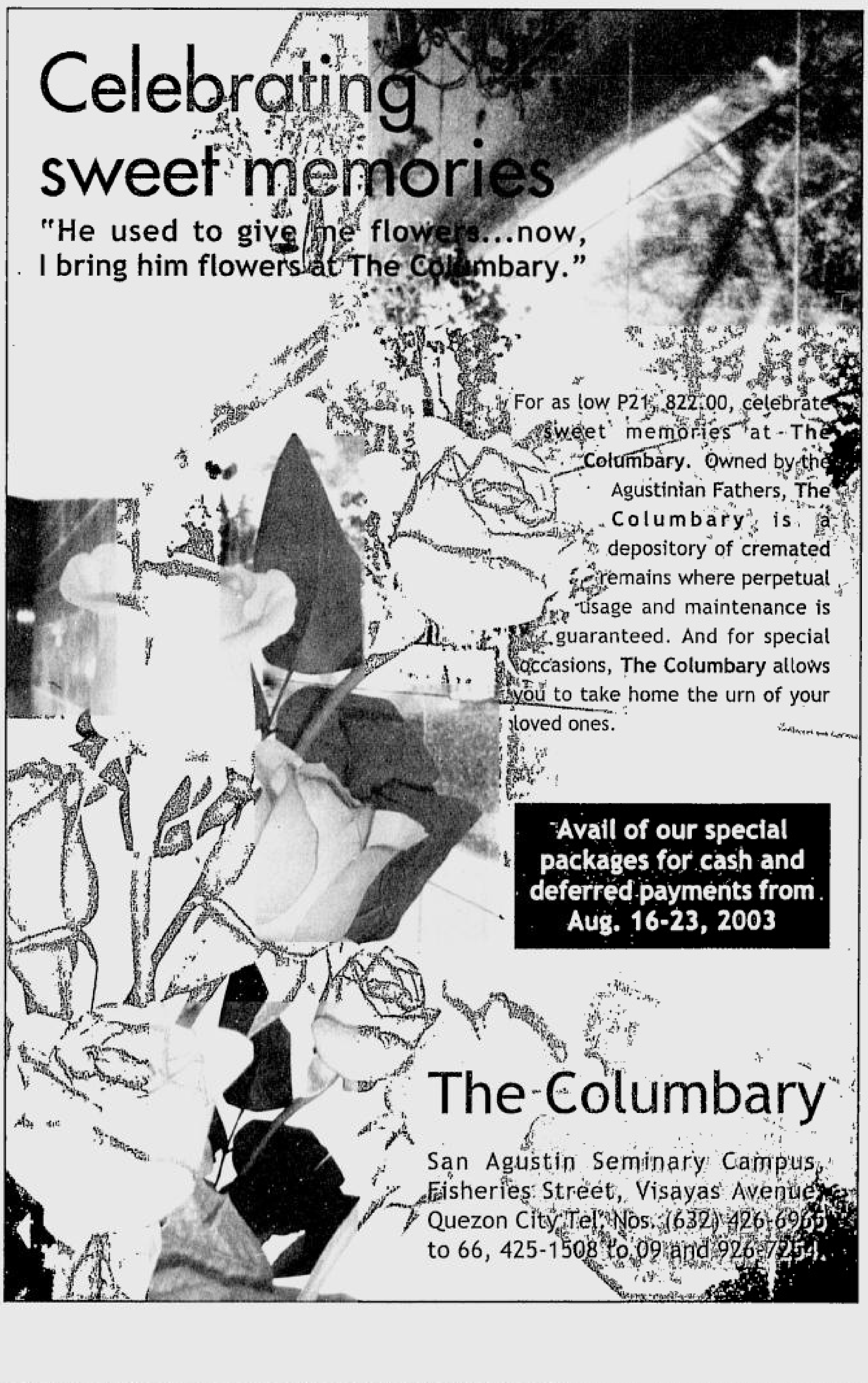

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Vieira de Mello: Ultimate diplomatic troubleshooter

UNITED NATIONS—A shocked world yesterday mourned the loss of Sergio Vieira de Mello, a top diplomatic troubleshooter and rising star within the United Nations who took on the world body's toughest job in Iraq.

Vieira de Mello, who sympathized with the resentment of Iraqis at having foreign troops on their soil, was among 20 people killed in Tuesday's truck bomb attack on the UN offices in Baghad. He was 55.

For more than 30 years, the veteran diplomat from Brazil tried to bring peace to the world's most dangerous hot spots, including Kosovo and East Timor. His diplomatic skills were so admired that he had been talked about as a future UN secretary general.

"Our nation mourns the death of a unique and unforgettable friend," East Timor President Xanana Gusmao said. "As transitional administrator in East Timor . . . Sergio Vieira de Mello endeared himself to the people of East Timor with his common touch, sensitivity, sense of humor and charisma."

Vieira de Mello reluctantly agreed to leave his job as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in June and accept a four-month assignment as the top envoy in Baghdad at the request of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. He was the top choice of the United States, which lobbied quietly for his selection.

After his appointment, Vieira de Mello said his top priority was to protect the interests of the Iraqi people under the US-led occupation.

"I have been sent here with a mandate to assist the Iraqi people and those responsible for the administration of this land to achieve . . . freedom, the possibility of managing their own destiny and determining their own future," he said upon his arrival in Baghdad.

In a briefing to the UN Security Council just 3 1/2 weeks ago, however, Vieira de Mello warned that security in Iraq remained tenuous and declared that "the United Nations presence in Iraq remains vulnerable to any who would seek to target our organization."

Servant of humanity

"Our security continues to rely significantly on the reputation of the United Nations, our ability to demonstrate, meaningfully, that we are in Iraq to assist its people, and our independence," he said, expressing great concern at attacks targeting international organizations and humanitarian agencies.

Annan, who nurtured Vieira de Mello's career, called him "an outstanding servant of humanity" and said his death was "a bitter blow for the United Nations, and for me personally."

"Those who killed him have committed a crime, not only against the United Nations but against Iraq itself," Annan said. The work that Vieira de Mello began, he added, should "be completed so that his death will not have been in vain."

UN spokesperson Fred Eckhard said Vieira de Mello was "a rising star" and "one of the most talented people that we have on the UN staff."

US President George W. Bush said Vieira de Mello committed his life to advancing the cause of human rights and was selflessly "helping the Iraqi people move down the path toward a democratic country governed by the rule of law."

Bill Richardson, a former US ambassador to the United Nations, described Vieira de Mello as "the ultimate troubleshooter . . . the ultimate diplomat (who) would put himself in harm's way."

Human rights organizations also mourned his death.

"It is tragic he should end up the victim of the kind of war crime he fought so hard to prevent," said Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch.

Vieira de Mello's posting in Iraq capped a career as the UN point man, who was sent to conflict zones to help end bloodshed and rebuild ravaged countries.

Introducing Vieira de Mello in late May as his new special representative for Iraq, Annan said his "exceptional and unique experience" in running post-conflict UN operations in Kosovo and East Timor, and his reputation "as a good team builder and a consensus builder" made him the perfect choice.

Brilliant job

Former US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who knew Vieira de Mello for 25 years, said he did "a brilliant job" in bringing East Timor to independence.

The Brazilian took a break from conflict zones to head the UN human rights commission in Geneva, "and then as soon as Baghdad appeared, back Sergio went into combat—and it was combat, despite the fact that he was impeccably dressed," Holbrooke told CNN.

In Iraq, Vieira de Mello had to rely on both diplomacy and tough talk as the United Nations tried to find its place after the Iraqi war came close to rendering it obsolete.

He took pains to remind everybody that the United Nations would be in Iraq long after US forces leave and insisted that the world body—not the US-led coalition—should control the spending of Iraqi oil revenues.

In his last interview published before his death, Vieira de Mello sympathized with Iraqi resentment at having foreign troops on their soil.

"It is traumatic. It must be one of the most humiliating periods in their history. Who would like to see their country occupied? I would not like to see foreign tanks in Copacabana," Vieira de Mello told the Brazilian newspaper Estado de Sao Paulo in an interview published Monday.

Hands-on operator

Born in Rio de Janeiro on March 15, 1948, Vieira de Mello studied philosophy at the prestigious Sorbonne University in Paris before embarking on a career in the United Nations, rapidly gaining a reputation as a smooth-talking, hands-on operator.

He joined the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in 1969, serving in Bangladesh during its independence in 1971. Following the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus he worked with refugees on the island.

He spent three years in charge of UNHCR operations in Mozambique during the civil war that followed its independence from Portugal in 1975, and three more in military-ruled Peru. He became senior political adviser to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon between 1981 and 1983, covering the period when Israel invaded.

Vieira de Mello then returned to the UNHCR, working at its head office in Geneva for 10 years.

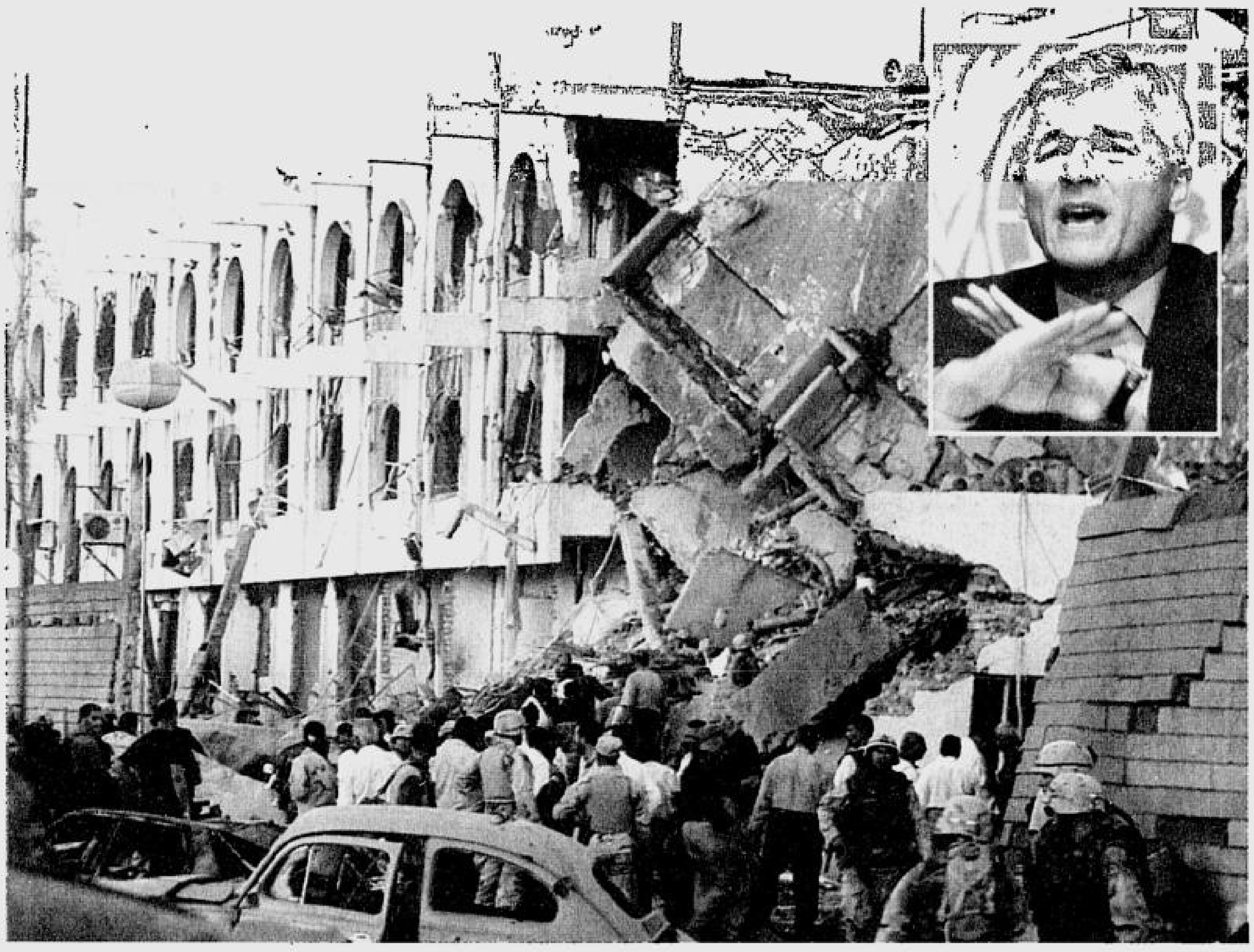
The early 1990s found him in Cambodia and then in disintegrating Yugoslavia. After working on the refugee problem in central Africa, he was made assistant high commissioner for refugees in 1996 and became UN undersecretary general in New York two years later.

He was a special UN envoy in Kosovo following the US-led bombing raids that broke Serbian control of the Yugoslav province in 1999.

When Indonesia withdrew from East Timor later that year, Vieira de Mello was sent there, gaining widespread praise for overseeing the country's three-year transition to independence.

"You don't change the devastation of 1999 into a Garden of Eden in 2 1/2 years," he said, but added, "we have laid solid bases for the country to live in peace."

Vieira de Mello was divorced and had two sons. His mother lives in Rio de Janeiro. *AP, AFP*



MOST devastating attack on a UN civilian complex in UN history. (Inset) Vieira de Mello, top UN envoy in Iraq, who has been hailed as a brilliant hands-on operator for peace, was among those killed.

REUTERS

2 Filipinos killed in UN Baghdad blast

From page A1

envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello. Manuel would have celebrated her 54th birthday today.

"The assault on the United Nations office is an act against international solidarity for peace, democracy and freedom. The Philippines joins the rest of the international community in condemning it in the strongest terms and in calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice," Ms Macapagal said.

"We are not intimidated in the least in fighting side-by-side with the global coalition against terrorism to stop these criminal and inhuman acts," she added.

Humanitarian

Ms Macapagal, a staunch supporter of the US-led war on Iraq and global campaign against terrorism, said a team of Filipino soldiers, policemen, doctors and nurses would push through with humanitarian mission to the war-ravaged country.

"This commitment will stand firm in the face of the fresh wave of terrorist attacks and will not relent until the total defeat of terrorists everywhere," she said.

Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said the attack was intended to undermine the role of the United Nations in rebuilding Iraq following the US-led invasion that ousted strongman Saddam Hussein.

"The United Nations was on a mission of peace and development in Iraq. It was clear that its mandate was not military or security in nature but purely humanitarian, aimed at the reconstruction of the country and to support the Iraqi people. This makes the attack all the more reprehensible," Ople said.

He said the attack would not shake the country's "determination to contribute to addressing the pressing humanitarian need of the people of Iraq."

Ople said he had instructed the Philippine Embassy in Iraq to coordinate with authorities in ensuring the safety of other Filipinos working there.

Departure

Army Brig. Gen. Pedro Ramboanga, head of the Philippine contingent to Iraq, said he and 55 other soldiers, 26 policemen and 15 health workers would mostly engage in noncombat work for six months as part of the multinational peacekeeping force led by Poland.

Members of the Philippine contingent were scheduled to leave aboard a Boeing 737 chartered jet at 8:20 p.m. Wednesday for Kuwait, where they will stay for a few days before heading for Iraq to join a nine-man advance team.

Another 84 peacekeepers from the health and social welfare departments will be deployed to Iraq at a later date.

Ramboanga said the Philippine contingent would be stationed in the southern part of Iraq, a relatively peaceful area, but he stressed it was prepared for any attack from pro-Saddam forces.

"We will be deployed 100 km from Baghdad, but we can't tell if there will be no incidents there. The bulk of the incidents are happening north of Baghdad, the Tikrit area," he said.

"Our contingent is noncombatant . . . But as part of the rules of engagement, we will protect ourselves."

Ramboanga said the Filipino soldiers would be engaged in engineering work while the policemen would help in the training of Iraqi policemen. The doctors, nurses and social workers will assist "in stress-management needed in the area," he added.

Final checks

At the grandstand of the Villamor Air Base early Wednesday, soldiers and police officers made final checks on their backpacks and their M-16 rifles. Some had their passports processed at a table; others hugged their children.

"I'm not really scared," said Renato Magbalon, a 43-year-old police officer who has battled communist guerrillas and criminals. "What I'm worried about is the language because the Muslims there have a different language and we might not understand each other."

His wife, Abilina, was nervous. She said the family prayed for Magbalon's safety before leaving the house, with everyone holding hands.

As Magbalon watched TV images of Tuesday's bombing in Baghdad, Magbalon said he was reminded of the heartlessness of terrorists. "They would never win. People won't support them," he said.

Magbalon said he witnessed such terror when he helped attend to the victims of bomb attacks that killed 22 people in Metro Manila on Dec. 30, 2000—the country's worst terrorist attack.

Air Force Sgt. Edwin Villamor, 34, said he felt a little nervous but was proud to be part of a contingent carrying the Philippine flag to help Iraq.

"If your time is up, your time is up," he said. "We're going there not to get involved in the fighting ... My only prayer is that I could return home, still strong."

The peacekeepers will each receive a monthly compensation of $500 from the Philippine government.

Vieira de Mello

While the Philippine contingent was preparing for their departure, UN officials and foreign diplomats gathered in Manila to pay tribute to Vieira de Mello in a hall with his pictures, a UN flag, black ribbons, orchids and red anthuriums. Talked revolved around memories of Vieira de Mello. *(See story above.)*

Arthur Jauchian, a Filipino UN official, recalled how Vieira de Mello once sent rescue helicopters from East Timor after he and other UN personnel were trapped in the violence in West Timor. Vieira de Mello served as UN administrator of East Timor from 1999 to 2002.

"On behalf of those who survived in the rampage in West Timor, I would like to pay tribute to him," Jauchian said. "We'll never forget him." *With reports from Philip Tubeza, AP and AFP*

20 dead, 100 hurt . . .

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US civilian administrator in Iraq.

Speaking for the US-backed council, Chalabi pointed the finger at deposed President Saddam Hussein's followers, saying: "We have no doubt that those who carried out this terrorist criminal act are the remnants of the regime and their friends."

Top envoy killed

The top UN envoy to Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, was among those killed in Tuesday's suspected suicide bombing involving a cement truck packed with explosives—the most devastating attack on a UN civilian complex in the world body's 58-year history.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack that was condemned by most of the world leaders. US President George W. Bush vowed to hunt down the bombers and said he would not be intimidated by "terrorists and the remnants of the brutal regime" into giving up his goal of transforming Iraq into a peaceful democracy.

The bombing prompted countries, which had bitterly opposed each other over the US-led war, to say the world was now united in helping Iraq. "Such terrorist incidents cannot break the will of the international community to further intensify its efforts to help the people of Iraq," the 15-member UN Security Council said in a statement.

More than 100 people were wounded in the strike which came a day after Bremer, a counterterrorism expert, said fighters from Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network were operating in Iraq.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said the deadly attack that killed his top envoy to Iraq would not drive the world body out of the country. Annan said he was to meet with the Security Council later in the day to discuss security arrangements for UN workers in Iraq.

"We will persevere. We will continue. It is essential work," Annan said at a news conference in Stockholm, Sweden, where he stopped briefly before heading to the UN headquarters in New York. "We will not be intimidated."

Shunning

A cement truck detonated at the concrete wall outside the three-story Canal Hotel at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, blasting an 1.8-meter-deep (6-foot-deep) crater in the ground, shredding the facade of the hotel housing UN offices and stunning an organization that had been welcomed by many Iraqis in contrast to the US-led occupation forces.

"There are so many people who are still missing," said Veronique Taveau, a spokesperson for the UN Humanitarian Coordinator.

Fifteen bodies in white bags were counted by a UN worker at the hotel, and a survey of Baghdad hospitals by The Associated Press found five other people who had died in the blast. Taveau said Wednesday the UN figure for the dead was 17 and 100 people were wounded.

"I saw legs and arms, charred remains," said journalist Grant Hodgson, who was at a news conference in the UN building when it was bombed.

Television pictures from inside the building showed a man addressing reporters when a huge explosion rang out and the room went dark. It became a murky scene of dust and frightened people with bloodied faces.

The Canal Hotel operates more as an office building than a hotel. The cafeteria is a popular place for humanitarian workers and journalists to meet

All-night effort

After an all-night effort to find survivors, the rescue operation appeared to have turned into a grim search for the bodies of the many people unaccounted for at the heavily damaged UN headquarters. US soldiers maintained a large presence in the area and US Army trucks were coming and going from the compound.

Vieira de Mello was meeting with other UN officials when the explosion struck. A news conference was also under way in the building, where 300 UN employees had worked.

Trapped

The 55-year-old veteran diplomat from Brazil was trapped in the rubble, and workers gave him water as they tried to extricate him. Hours later, the United Nations announced his death.

In Geneva on Wednesday, UN staff sealed Vieira de Mello's private office in the lakeside headquarters of the human rights office and attached a photograph of him to the door. Staff placed flowers and a candle in front of the door next to a pale blue UN flag.

UN and US officials called the bombing a "terrorist attack," but there was no immediate claim of responsibility. The bombing came nearly two weeks after a car exploded and killed 19 people at the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad and after a string of dramatic attacks on oil and water pipelines in Iraq.

Like the remote-controlled explosion at the Jordanian Embassy, the suicide bombing on the UN headquarters focused on a high-profile target with many civilians inside and resembled attacks blamed on Islamic militants elsewhere in the world. It was far more sophisticated than the guerrilla attacks that have plagued US forces, featuring hit-and-run shootings carried out by small bands or remote-controlled roadside bombs.

As FBI agents joined the investigation, Bernard Kerik, the former New York City police commissioner who is rebuilding the Iraqi police force, told reporters that evidence suggested the attack was a suicide bombing.

But he said it was "much too early" to say if Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network was behind the attack. "We don't have that kind of evidence yet." *Reports from AP and Reuters*

Lowly paid millionaires

From page A1

check by the same group.)

Conti is amazed because these are the assets declared by officials in compliance with the law requiring them to file an annual SAL. He said some, if not most, of the officials could have bigger undeclared assets.

Conti said the list did not mean these officials would be charged with unexplained wealth, as were five DPWH and BOC officials yesterday. *See story on page A1.*

He said that because of the sheer number of officials to be investigated, his group would need some time to determine who among these public servants had amassed wealth disproportionate to their lawful income.

Undersecretary Bobby Capco of the Office of the Presidential Chief of Staff said the ongoing scrutiny of the SALs of all public officials underscored the seriousness of the Macapagal administration in combating graft and corruption in the government.

Ironically, President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, has been accused by Sen. Panfilo Lacson of amassing some P270 million from contributions to her campaign.

Capco said, however, that the Malacañang lifestyle check had been implemented long before Lacson made the accusation against the First Couple.

Top of the heap

Based on the investigation of the Transparency Group, Alberta Iglesias, BOC collector IV in La Union, emerged the wealthiest among the officials of the BOC, BIR and DPWH.

She declared P96.7 million in assets and P37.5 million in liabilities (loan) for a net worth of P59.2 million. Her SAL listed land and buildings worth P92 million and vehicles worth P4.7 million.

Assistant Commissioner Alberto Pio de Roda of the BIR-ISOS, comes second with P53.4 million in assets, P690,000 in liabilities or a net worth of P52.7 million. He declared P53.4 million worth of land/building, jewelry, appliances, furniture and vehicles.

Third is DPWH Region I director Josefino N. Rigor, with P43 million in assets and a net worth (assets minus liabilities) of P17 million.

Top millionaires

The BOC's top millionaires, with eight-figure net worths, are Iglesias; Tomas Alcid (collector V for Pampanga) who has P23.3 million in net worth (assets minus liabilities); Billy Bibit, district collector for Cebu, P16.9 million; deputy commissioner Gil Valera (charged with graft at the Ombudsman yesterday), P16 million; deputy commissioner Ray Allas, P14.8 million; and Melencio Lopez, collector IV, port of Manila, P13.6 million.

BOC officials with net worths from P8 million to P4 million are: Ricardo Belmonte, Titus Sangil, Fidel Camanag, Emma Rosqueta, Geoffrey Gacula, Adelina Molina, Napoleon Morales, Victorio Francisco, Evelyn Medija, Dante Maranan, Celso Templo, Rosemarie Padilla and Carlos Corsiga.

Those with net worths of over P3 million to P1 million are: Errol Albano, Pricilla Bauzon, Edward de la Cuesta, Nicasio Gamboa, George Jereos, Rene Venavides, Sonia Togonon, Teresita Roque, Alexander Arevalo, Lourdes Mangaoang, Virginia Flores, Leopoldo Aquino Jr., Ma. Cecilia Resulta, Adriano Ensomo, Ruperto Fabic, Antonio Ferraren and Roger Lim.

The only non-millionaires are Vicente Yutangco Jr., deputy collector for Tacloban City; Felicidad Chua, collector II; and Romeo Guan, COO Zamboanga City.

Of the 78 BIR officials who filed their SALS, only 15 are non-millionaires.

After Pio de Roda, BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. emerged the second wealthiest, with a net worth of P27.7 million. He had no liabilities.

Mustapha Gandarosa, revenue director, came in third with P16.4 million net worth, followed by deputy commissioner Licerio Evangelista, with a net worth of P16.1 million.

Completing the top 10 BIR millionaires are assistant commissioner Edwin Abella, P8.4 million; director II Zenaida Chang, P7.3 million; revenue region 11 director Rene Aguas, P7.2 million; region 16 director Jose Tan, P7 million; region 5 assistant director Corazon Pangcog, P6.3 million; and region 5 director II Nestor Valeroso, P5.9 million.

Other BIR officials with net worths ranging from P5 million to P3 million are deputy commissioner Lilia Guillermo, Raymund Gallardo, Leonor Rogers, Jaime Concepcion, Aguinaldo Miravalles, Celia King, Rogelio Zambarrano, Antonio Montemayor, Lucien Sayuno, Percival Salazar, Estelita Aguirre, Ruben Buenaventura, Anselmo Adriano, Lilian Hefti, Gerardo Flores, Jaime Santiago, Virginia Tomas and Merlinda Ordoyo.

The DPWH rich

At the DPWH, the second wealthiest is Bukidnon engineering district engineer Ruben Barroso, who filed P10.6 million in assets and a P9.8-million net worth. But DPWH Bureau of Construction director Clarita Bandonillo had bigger assets worth P13.9 million, and a net worth of P8.9 million.

The DPWH millionaires and their net worths: Celso Lumaniog, region VIII, P9.7 million; Pedro Herrera Jr., region IX, P6.9 million; Abelardo Monge Jr., region IV-B, P5.3 million; Fidel Ginez, Agno Flood Control System project manager, P5.2 million; Robert Lala, region X, P4.4 million; Rodolfo Alday, region II, P4.2 million; Mocamad Raki-in, region XIII, P3.9 million; Huillio Belleza, region IV-A, P3.9 million; Rudy Canastillo, region IX, P3.6 million; Nestor Agustin, region IV-A, P3.2 million; Judy Sese, Bureau of Research and Standards, P3.2 million;

Luisito Visorde, Bureau of Maintenance, P3.1 million; Daniel Domingo, CAR, P3 million; Rolando Asis, region VI, P3 million; Jaime Pacanan, region VIII, P2.9 million; Carlos Mutuc, Bureau of Maintenance, P2.9 million; Nicasio de la Cruz, region I, P2.9 million; Eugenio Pipo Jr., Ined II, P2.9 million; Eleno Colinares, region V, P2.9 million.

The following had net worths of P2 million or more: Osop Ali, Pastor Tabale, Romeo Momo, Sinaloan Macarambon, Alfredo Tolentino, Luis Mamitag Jr., Edilberto Carabbacan, Veniedo Reyes, Emiliano Salang Jr., Ramon Aquino, Dahila Nolasco, Pundidato Mitmug and Edilberto Fabila.

With net worths of more than P1 million: Rafael Yabut, Jesus Salmo, Dimas Soguilon, Raul Asis, Reynaldo Esqguerra, Faustino Sta. Maria, Gilberto reyes, Mariano Alquiza, Wilfredo Agustino and Antonio Molano Jr.

Only region 2 assistant director Romulo Mabunga, region 8 assistant director Romualdo Baltazar, and Bureau of Equipment OIC director Alfonso Sarmen Jr. are non-millionaires.

Encarnacion

Of the eight public works undersecretaries and assistant secretaries, Undersecretary Teodoro Encarnacion is the wealthiest with a net worth of P13.3 million and no liability.

Assistant Secretaries Bashir Rasuman and Salvador Pleyto (who was similarly charged in the Ombudsman) had net worths of P5.9 million each.

Executive head Edmundo Mir had P4.9 million in net worth; Undersecretary Antonio Inocentes, P3.5 million; Assistant Secretary Manuel Agyao, P2.2 million; Undersecretary Manuel Bonoan, P1.7 million; and Assistant Secretary Raul Asis, P1.4 million.

Ex-PEA chair calls Copa claim 'sheer fabrication'

ERNEST Villareal, former chair of the Public Estates Authority, dismissed as "sheer fabrication" the claim of Pastor "Boy" Saycon, chair of the Council on Philippine Affairs, that he made a P450-million deposit at the Union Bank branch on Perea street in Makati.

Saycon said Tuesday the money was given to Villareal by JD Legazpi Construction Co., which bagged the contract for the construction of a 2.3-km portion of the President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard in the reclaimed area of the Manila Bay.

Villareal said Saycon's accusation was aimed at smearing further the reputation of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo for political reasons.

He said he intended to file a libel suit against Saycon for his malicious and false statement to the press. "This would give him an opportunity to prove his claim, and myself an opportunity to prove him a liar," said the former PEA chair, who, along with other former PEA officials, is facing graft charges before the Ombudsman in connection with the alleged overpricing of the boulevard. The charges were filed by Copa and other civil society groups.

Villareal said he did not know anything about any P450 million bank deposit. "I have never received for myself or for others any money from JD Legazpi Construction."

He also said that he had never assisted in or deposited any money for the First Gentleman. "I have never been to the Union Bank branch on Perea Street (in Makati) nor have I ever instructed anybody to transact any business, for me, with that branch," he said.

One of the government officials named by Sen. Panfilo Lacson as a frequent visitor to Arroyo's office in the LTA Building in Makati defended his visits.

"They were simple friendly visits and I find nothing wrong in them. It's just like when Mr. Lacson used to visit President Estrada when he (Lacson) was police chief," said Edgardo Manda, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority.

The airport chief deplored the way Lacson "publicly humiliated" him and other friends of Arroyo during the senator's privileged speech on Monday.

"He did not even have the decency to get our side before wantonly destroying our reputation," he said.

"If Mr. Lacson thinks it's wrong visiting long-time friends, then we can't just imagine what kind of character he has," Manda said.

The airport chief said he and the First Gentleman's other friends mentioned by Lacson had known each other since their Rotary Club days in the 1980s.

Manda served as a deputy chief of staff of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo when she was still the Vice President.

He was also a president of the Lualhati Foundation, the charitable organization identified with Ms Macapagal which received an P8-million donation in 1999 from Mark Jimenez, a friend of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

With a report from Jerome Aning

STATEMENT OF THE FIRST GENTLEMAN

I have read a copy of the Privilege Speech of Senator Panfilo Lacson before the Senate entitled "The Incredible Hulk", Chapter 1. While I would have preferred to reserve comment until after hearing the Last Chapter of this fairy tale by Mr. Lacson, I think it would be remiss of me to allow the slander by Mr. Lacson of many innocent people to go without comment.

This so-called expose of Mr. Lacson was made with the "pa-pogi" grandstanding and self-aggrandizement at the expense of others that have characterized his entire career.

First of all, I use my office at LTA Building in Makati as my formal work place for my work as First Gentleman. When President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office, I choose out of delicadeza NOT to use Malacañang as my principal place of work. This despite of the fact that Malacañang has always provided facilities for the Presidential Spouse, I did not, and do not wish to give anyone cause to think that I am in any way interfering with the Office of the President. Everyone knows this. **MY OFFICES AT LTA BUILDING ARE OPEN TO ALL. THAT IS NOT A SECRET.**

Second, EVERONE is welcome to visit me at my LTA Offices. My visitors, in addition to Mr. Lacson's maliciously selective list, have included other Senators, Congressman, priests, nuns, journalists, sports heroes, and many beneficiaries of the charity projects of the Office of the First Gentleman. Mr. Lacson has obviously placed my office under constant surveillance, which explains the heightened reports of suspicious characters and vehicles around our premises.

Third, the attempt by Mr. Lacson to trivialize the impeachment of former President Estrada by concocting the Jose Pidal imbroglio is an insult to the public. **I CATEGORICALLY DENY THE MALICIOUS IMPUTATION OF MR. LACSON THAT I USED THE NAME JOSE PIDAL OR THAT I OWN THE SO-CALLED JOSE PIDAL ACCOUNT.** The grandstand attempt by Mr. Lacson to force a similarity between obviously different signatures contained in unsubstantiated documents is pathetic. I am willing to have the alleged signature of Jose Pidal analyzed by the handwriting experts of the National Bureau of Investigation and the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory to dispel the misimpression Mr. Lacson seeks to create. If Mr. Lacson has a case, I challenge him to present his evidence to the proper judicial forum. I will face him there. **PARAPHRASING THE LATE NINOY AQUINO,IF YOU CANNOT FILE A CASE IN COURT WITH HARD EVIDENCE, YOU ARE A LIAR!**

Fourth, Mr. Lacson should not engage in parliamentary privilege striptease. How many speeches does he intend to make? How much time of the Senate does he intend to waste? He should have presented his ENTIRE case, not the media-baiting chapter-by-chapter style, which smacks of "trapo" politics. Make your case, Mr. Lacson, your entire case.

Senator Panfilo Lacson, who has always been bragging over media that he hates politics and politicians, is finally revealing himself to be the traditional politician or "trapo" that he supposedly despises. By using the Senate floor as a venue for his demolition job against the First Gentleman and as a launching pad for his presidential candidacy, he makes a mockery of the legislature and of public opinion.

Senator Lacson, whose career has been characterized by grandstanding and building himself up at the expense of others, should instead explain the long trail of corpses, widows, and lies that have resulted from the Kuratong Baleleng rubout cases.

Finally, this so-called expose is clearly an attempt to derail Senate judgment on the serious accusations of drug involvement and salvaging of witnesses, which Mr.Lacson faces before his peers. Mr. Lacson is carrying out his well-publicized threat to splatter his so-called expose on the public, because of the refusal of the Senators to set aside the Committee findings on his criminal liability. This is an attempt to politicize the air and restart Mr. Lacson's sputtering campaign for the 2004 elections. I urge our distinguished Senators not to allow the Senate to be used by Mr. Lacson for his narrow political ends.

ADVT.

The last time I saw Ninoy

From page A1

through the same experience. I think Ninoy was convinced that suffering ennobles, but he was not prepared to experiment with other people's lives—only with his own.

Original plan

The original plan was for Ninoy to arrive in Manila on Aug. 7, a Sunday, at a time when there would be four or five planes arriving so there would be a ready-made crowd at the airport. Our only son, Noynoy, and our youngest daughter, Kris, would accompany him. It was necessary for Kris to be in Manila early in August so she could enroll at the International School. And in case Ninoy was arrested at the airport and detained again in Fort Bonifacio, Noynoy could take care of Kris. Our three other daughters, Ballsy, Pinky and Viel, were to stay with me to finish the packing and the closing up of the house.

But then we learned from the Philippine Consulate official in New York that there were orders from Manila not to issue us any passports. At that time, all our passports had already expired and we had been denied new passports. So there was a change of plan. Ninoy decided it would be better if he went alone to attract less attention, and the rest of us were supposed to follow him after two weeks.

Ninoy had acquired a passport through the help of Rashid Lucman, a former congressman from Mindanao. This passport carried the name Marcial Bonifacio (Marcial for martial law and Bonifacio to represent his imprisonment in Fort Bonifacio). Ninoy was able to get a second passport from one of his friends in one of the Philippine consulates in America, and this passport carried his name, Benigno S. Aquino Jr.

Last time

The last time I saw Ninoy alive was on Aug. 13, 1983. We had all attended Mass that morning at Saint Mary's Chapel in Boston College.

Both of us had very little sleep the night before. I remember being so nervous and in fact I was shivering that night, which was quite unusual because it was a warm summer night in Boston. (Whenever I feel very nervous, I usually shiver regardless of the temperature.) I could sense that Ninoy was also feeling quite apprehensive, but he reminded me that we had already discussed the matter and he didn't want to talk about it anymore. I guess he did not want me to worry more.

And so we left it at that. I just prayed and prayed as I could not sleep even as I felt that Ninoy was just pretending to be asleep.

We saw Ninoy off at the Logan airport and we tried to be cheerful as we told him that we would see him in two weeks.

Ninoy had to take another route home—from Boston on Aug. 13, 1983, to Los Angeles, then to Singapore, next to Malaysia, where we had friends in the ruling family, to Hong Kong, and then to Taipei. And from Taipei to Manila.

He had chosen Taipei as the final stopover because the Philippines had severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan. This made him feel more secure; the Taiwan authorities could pretend they did not know of his presence. There would also be a couple of Taiwanese friends to take care of him.

Ninoy and I talked for the last time on Aug. 20, 1983, at 7 p.m. Boston time, which was Aug. 21, 1983, 7 a.m. Taipei time. He told me that he had written letters for me and for each of our five children, and that he would soon be leaving for the airport. I told him I had been informed that AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Fabian Ver had warned any airline bringing Ninoy in that Ninoy would not be allowed to disembark, and that the airline would be ordered to fly Ninoy back to his original port of embarkation.

Ninoy said they could not do that to him because he is, was and always would be a Filipino. And he told me that most likely he would be re-arrested and brought back to Fort Bonifacio. In that case, he said, he would ask Gen. Josephus Ramas for permission to call me up.

Phone call

At around 2 a.m. Boston time, Aug. 21, 1983, a Sunday, our phone rang and my eldest daughter Ballsy who answered it was shocked when the Kyodo news agency representative in New York asked her if it were true that her father had been killed at the Manila International Airport.

United Press International and Associated Press reporters also called, asking for verification.

I was hoping and praying that all these reports were false. But when Member of Parliament Shintaro Ishihara of Japan called me up from Tokyo and told me that Kiyoshi Wakamiya had called him from Manila and verified the shooting report, my children and I cried as we had to accept the cruel fact that Ninoy had been shot dead.

A funeral like no other for Ninoy

From page A1

While discussing the film, I was caught off guard when Ninoy suddenly wished aloud that he would want a funeral just like Mahatma Gandhi's, where people came in droves "as far as the eyes could see." Having no inkling of the tragedy that awaited us on his return home, I had casually assured him that I would make sure his funeral would even be more beautiful and more memorable than Gandhi's.

I should have sensed that day that watching the film would be some sort of premonition of things to come.

On the week that we watched "Gandhi," I was helping Ninoy go through different airline schedules for his return to the Philippines. Ninoy, who was then exiled in Boston, had to undertake several measures to ensure his safe return home.

We had tried to dissuade Ninoy from returning, but he had already made up his mind. My sister Lupita and I then returned to Manila to prepare for his return, while my husband Len was on standby in Singapore.

Refuge in Malaysia

Singapore would be their take-off point to Malaysia, where they planned to seek refuge in the home of the Sultan of Johore, a personal friend of both Ninoy and Len, in case Ninoy would be barred from returning.

On the morning of Aug. 21, 1983, everything that was agreed upon between the government and the people who helped prepare for Ninoy's arrival—Eva Estrada Kalaw, Doy Laurel and Lito Banayo (who coined the famous phrase *"Hindi ka nag-iisa"*)—were ignored by the authorities. That was when I began to worry, sensing that something would go terribly wrong on the day of Ninoy's return.

Ninoy's widow Cory had wanted a quiet, private wake for her husband, but my mother and I prevailed upon her to let the people see Ninoy for the last time. At the back of my mind, I was recalling my promise to Ninoy a few weeks earlier.

With Ninoy's martyrdom, moreover, I believed then that Ninoy no longer belonged to us; he already belonged to the Filipino people, whom he said were worth dying for.

Mother's wish

But on top of carrying out Ninoy's wish, there was one more thing that I thought should be done. While in Loyola, I agreed with my mother's suggestion not to change Ninoy's bloodstained clothes and leave his face as it was. "I want the world to see what they did to my son," my mother said.

Ninoy got his wish. His wake was filled with people from all walks of life as far as the eyes could see—much like what we had witnessed when we watched "Gandhi." The funeral march was even more astounding. The line of mourners was so long that those who left the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City at 9 a.m. reached the Manila Memorial Park to bury Ninoy at 6 p.m.

By the time the truck bearing Ninoy reached his final resting place, the tailend of the funeral march was still somewhere along the South Luzon Expressway.

Just like Gandhi's funeral bed, we also filled the 10-wheeler truck where Ninoy's body was laid and transported from Times Street to Sto. Domingo Church with countless sampaguitas and other flowers of all hues of yellow, the color that would later become the symbol of the pro-democracy movement that swept across the country and, later the rest of the globe.

The hundreds of thousands of people who came to catch a last glimpse of Ninoy saw him in the same state we saw him in Fort Bonifacio, where his body was brought on the day he was killed. I, accompanied by my mother Doña Aurora and my elder brother Paul, was still overcome by grief when the military transferred Ninoy's body to the Loyola Memorial Chapels from Fort Bonifacio to be autopsied, but the thought of Ninoy's wish did not leave my mind.

Surrogate father

At that point, I came to accept that Ninoy was gone. I had lost not only my elder brother but my surrogate father as well.

Our father had died when I was only one-and-a-half years old. Being the eldest male sibling, Ninoy took his place as head of the Aquino family at a young age.

I was Ninoy's favorite. He called me "*bunso*" or "*bata*" and would only call me "Teresa" when he was about to scold me.

Ninoy was a strict father figure and a *"pakialamero"*(meddling) brother. He would scrutinize everything—from the lipstick I put on to the suitors who dared come to our house.

When the time came for Len to formally ask my hand in marriage, I had to verify Ninoy's schedule on the day of the *pamamanhikan* to determine if he would be available. I thought Ninoy would be late because his schedule was always full, but when that Saturday came, he was there way before the scheduled arrival of Len and his parents. He was the one checking if the food was ready, if the house was clean, if everything was all right before Len and his family arrived.

Ninoy could also be exasperating, although in an endearing way. On the day of my wedding, he kept asking me, even as he was escorting me down the aisle, if I was sure that Len was the right man for me. He wanted me to be very happy and so he kept asking me if I was really certain that Len was "it," because, according to him, there was still time to back out. He only relaxed when I told him I was "very sure of Len."

'Illegal possession'

Len and Ninoy eventually became very close friends. They were so close that Len was arrested by the military and detained at Camp Crame while Ninoy was languishing in Fort Bonifacio during the martial law years. Len was detained without charges. Trying to put up a brave front, I had told friends, "What charges do they have against Len? Illegal possession of brother-in-law?"

After Ninoy's burial, Len and I went back to San Francisco. Without Ninoy, we felt we had no life here.

Len and I, along with our family, returned to the Philippines only in 1986, after Cory decided to run in the "snap" presidential poll.

Even before the Edsa Revolt broke out, Len and I were already on a plane to Malaysia, working out arrangements for Cory in case it would become necessary to protect her and whisk her out of the country through the southern backdoor.

Ninoy has had a great impact and influence, not only on me, but on many Filipinos who were jolted awake to the tyranny in their midst after his assasination.

Guiding principle

Twenty years after his death, Ninoy's words, which later became my guiding principle in pursuing my goals as a lawmaker, still ring true today: "An educated Filipino has power to chart his life. An educated Filipino knows his laws. One who knows his laws, knows his rights. And one who knows his rights won't permit tyrants to rule over him or trample on his liberties."

Ninoy set out to practice what he preached. The one law he had authored as a member of the Senate was the "Study Now Pay Later Plan," which was meant to provide underprivileged Filipinos the opportunity to gain a good education.

Education empowers

Education has always been the centerpiece of my legislative agenda ever since I became a legislator, first as a congresswoman in 1987 and a senator in 1998 up to the present. The fruits of this agenda are the 230 education-friendly laws I have so far authored or co-sponsored in the Congress. Only through education can we fulfill Ninoy's goal of truly empowering the Filipino. Genuine "People Power" means giving people the "power of choice" to chart their lives—and that power emanates only from education.

Cory awards people who empower people

From page A1

and country . . . working quietly, willingly, neither seeking nor getting publicity but making a real difference in their communities."

Cited in yesterday's program at the NBC Tent at The Fort commercial area in Taguig were the following (in alphabetical order):

- **ABS-CBN Foundation,** the socio-civic arm of the Lopez-owned broadcast giant, for pushing noble causes from children education to environmental consciousness.
- **Bahay Pangarap,** a Novaliches-based workshop and subsidiary of the Tahanang Walang Hagdanan; for giving livelihood training to the disabled.
- **Bayanihan Banking Program** of the Pasay City government for its easily accessible savings-based lending schemes for the city's poor.
- **Cartwheel Foundation,** for caring after and promoting education among children of indigenous peoples.
- **Couples for Christ,** for projects uplifting the urban poor, particularly in Smokey Mountain dump site community in Manila, and indigent villages in Tarlac.
- **Cribs Foundation** (Create Responsive Infants by Sharing), based in Marikina City; for caring for abandoned, neglected and abused children.
- **GMA7's Kapuso Foundation,** for its multi-faceted community services, cited as "corporate responsibility in action."
- **Kythe Foundation,** an Ateneo De Manila-based student organization, mainly for providing emotional lift for children cancer patients and their families.
- **Leaders for Health Project,** a joint humanitarian/medical effort among the Ateneo, Pfizer, and the Department of Health; particularly active in Western Samar, Biliran and Camarines Sur.
- **Lihok Filipina Foundation** of Cebu, for asserting women's rights and welfare in poor communities; cited for initiating village "patrols" to check on domestic violence.
- **Metrobank Foundation,** for two decades of setting "icons, role models for the youth" by giving awards of excellence in different fields.
- **Naga City People's Council,** for successfully fusing local government and civil society to push projects involving from education to environment.
- **Negros Kabisig Livelihood Foundation,** for helping local rice farmers increase their yield, augment their income, and overcome usury and high cost of farm implements.
- **Sacop** (Social Reform Center of Pampanga), a parish-based organization promoting self-reliance through livelihood training.
- **Sambayanang Muling Pagkabuhay Multi-Purpose Cooperative,** for turning former scavengers in Smokey Mountain dumpsite into entrepreneurs who recycle waste paper and plastics into high-quality handicraft.
- **Salba Dairy Farmers Cooperative,** based in San Pablo, City Council, for making production of milk and related products a viable alternative for some 80,000 farming families; maker of the "Gatas Pinoy" brand of fresh milk, choco milk, cheeses and sweets.
- **Serve Inc. (Socially and Ecologically Responsible and Viable Endeavors,** for advocating sustainable use of forest and their natural resources particularly among residents of Antipolo City.
- **Splash Foundation,** community service arm of skin-care products manufacturer Splash; for training residents of its host locality Novaliches in cosmetology.
- **Tabang Mindanaw,** a multi-sectoral humanitarian movement responsible for the biggest non-government relief and rehabilitation initiatives now covering up to 44 war-torn communities in Mindanao; its partners include the INQUIRER.
- **Visayas Cooperative Development Center,** for its region-wide assistance for the poor who wish to enter business, by teaching them the rudiments such as bookkeeping, auditing, management, etc.

In her speech, Aquino said she had personally met the awardees in her travels around the country.

She intends to seek out new awardees each year and will keep the PPP Movement free from politics, "beyond elections and regime changes." ***With reports from Rachelle Grace San Pedro***

New docs: 13 in top 10

From page A1

INQ7.net

The top ten are the following:

1. Joselito Cruz Javier
2. Eileen Rose Figueroa Manabat
3. Mark Anthony Santiago Sandoval
4. Marbert John Timbal Cardino
5. Marian Flores Manankil,
Maureen Concepcion Tang Santos
6. Jessie Lyn Pangilinan Bartolome
7. Karenrose Ramos Contreras,
Aileen Yu Sia
8. Melanie Samson Anclote,
Sammy Atienza Dizon
9. Maria Czarina Magpantay Acelajado-Onoya
10. Vinia Madonna Castillo Mendoza

Who are Victoria and Thomas Toh?

From page A1

nesses," the lawyer said.

Mamaril reckons that Vicky is slightly older than Thomas and is still single. "Tom and I would always talk business. He is more talkative while Vicky is the silent of the two. She would just say hi to me and that's it," the lawyer said

Thomas, on the other hand, is more talkative than Vicky, said Mamaril, a longtime lawyer for Thomas.

"He is a quiet and serious man, who is very business-minded. He hardly has any legal problems or even family problems," the lawyer said.

Thomas would drop in at Mamaril's office and serve Chinese food to the lawyer and his staff. "He is OK as a client, a very jolly fellow," Mamaril said.

Mamaril said he met Thomas, who is reportedly in his mid-40s, sometime in 1974 through Thomas' wife Josie Sia. The lawyer is counsel to Sia's mother. Thomas and Josie have five kids.

Family friends

Thomas and Vicky themselves admitted they are close to First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

In an interview with reporters over a speaker phone from Vancouver, Canada, Thomas and Vicky admitted that they and Arroyo were "family friends." In fact, Arroyo had served as the lawyer of the Tohs.

The ties between the Arroyos and the Tohs did not end there. Vicky handles the personal accounts of the Arroyos as well as those of her family for the past 15 years.

Asked if she had a special relationship with the First Gentleman, Vicky only said: "Why didn't they show other pictures of the trip?"

She referred to a photo of Arroyo and herself in San Francisco, California, that Lacson's office had furnished the media.

Vicky said that the trip was a group tour.

The Tohs have stayed in Vancouver since the second week of July to handle "family and personal matters," according to Mamaril. The trip was also part of their vacation.

Other members of the Toh family have settled in Canada, but they have remained Filipino citizens.

Bank accounts

Vicky said she and her brother would strongly oppose moves to freeze their accounts (in Union Bank), which Lacson suspects are being used by Arroyo to launder money.

Mamaril explained that the bank accounts of his clients could not be frozen by the Anti-Money Laundering Council because the deposits did not come from drugs, kidnapping or terrorism.

"Under the law, hearings will have to establish whether the money came from drugs, terrorism. There is no need to inquire into it. Senator Lacson himself said these funds were political contributions. On that basis, there's no need for an inquiry," Mamaril said.

He also pointed to "inaccuracies" in the privileged delivered by Lacson on Monday.

"It said that Thomas had P7.5 million in a bank account. When I talked to my client he said there was less than P700,000 in there."

More importantly, Mamaril said the money in the accounts of his clients came from their legitimate business. "They might be low-key but they have the capacity to have these accounts. *Nakaipon na rin yan.*"

As a testament to the Tohs' business acumen, Mamaril mentioned the family's hardware store, which has remained open despite "difficulties with the lumber business because there are hardly any trees to cut now."

He said the Tohs invested money in the importation of logs but that had stopped. "Sometimes, logs would arrive from Malaysia and other countries but they would be damaged."

Hurt and shocked

Both Thomas and Vicky said they were "hurt and shocked" by Lacson's accusation.

"This is all part of Mr. Lacson's personal vendetta against Mr. Arroyo. It's all very unfair. Every day our pictures are in newspapers and on TV," said an emotional Vicky.

Thomas said he was "surprised" that he was being linked to the First Gentleman. "I am shocked. All our funds there are legitimate from our lumber business for the past 20 years. How can that be?"

Thomas challenged Lacson to bring his charges to court. "He should go to the proper courts. We will answer the charges in the proper forum."

Thomas also said Lacson should be careful in accusing people. "We have been aboveboard. He is destroying our reputation," the businessman said.

Vicky said Lacson, a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, was not an officer and a gentleman. "He is invading our privacy. We are legitimate business people. He has caused us a lot of pain and grief," she said.

Mamaril added: "If the intention is politics, they should spare my clients just because they are close to Arroyo. It is not true they are dummies."

He added that his clients are ready to face a Senate inquiry into Lacson's accusations. "They will come home as soon as they finish the things they are doing."

Vicky said a sister of Lacson could be the source of Lacson. Vicky identified her as Christina Diaz, who is working in Union Bank in Imus, Cavite. "Perhaps she was the one who leaked the information," she said.

SCOUT AWARD FOR THE PRESIDENT
President Macapagal-Arroyo executes a Boy Scout salute to Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, Boy Scout of the Philippines Chair, as she receives an award of Chief Scout Medallion during rites at Malacanang Wednesday. EDWIN BACASMAS

Metro cops told to file SAL anew

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

METRO Manila policemen, have you already resubmitted your 2002 Statement of Assets and Liabilities?

As part of President Macapagal-Arroyo's order of conducting lifestyle checks on all government employees—including military officers and policemen—the National Capital Region Police has ordered all policemen to resubmit certified true copies of their 2002 statements of assets and liabilities.

The memo, dated Aug.5, 2003, gives policemen until Aug. 25 to resubmit their SAL forms.

Policemen, whom the INQUIRER talked to yesterday, said they had already submitted their 2002 SALs last March. A few of them said they were surprised why they were being asked to submit the forms again.

The reason the NCRPO memorandum cited was Ms Macapagal's call for lifestyle checks—even on policemen.

The President earlier ordered the probe on cops and soldiers following the July 27 Makati mutiny. During that incident, the mutineers alleged that some military officials had been enriching themselves through corrupt activities.

A statement from the Palace further said the probe on the government officials' lifestyles would be conducted to show the mutineers that the present administration does not tolerate corruption in the bureaucracy.

In the Northern Police District, 815 cops out of more than 1,800 have already complied with the NCRPO memorandum, NPD Personnel and Human Resources Development Division chief clerk Abelardo Ignacio said.

NPD Director Marcelino Franco earlier said that while he welcomed the lifestyle checks on cops, the probe could be conducted "carefully and quietly" to avoid subjecting innocent officers to trial by publicity and thereby damaging their reputation.

Housemaid falls to her death off QC high-rise

By Tina Santos

A HOUSEMAID fell to her death from a high-rise condominium in Quezon City before dawn yesterday morning.

Police said a 7-page suicide note indicated that Katherine Triguero jumped from the 21st floor of the Eastwood Olympic Heights Condominium, where she had been employed.

According to a police report, condominium security guards heard a thud at the second floor of the building at 12:20 a.m.

When they checked, they were shocked to see the victim's bloodied body on the concrete pavement.

The guards brought Triguero to the Quirino Memorial Medical Center but it was too late.

She suffered a broken skull, shattered bones, and lower jaw, the police said.

Evon Paredes, Triguero's coworker who saw Triguero minutes before she died, could not say what actually happened.

However, Paredes said Triguero was unusually quiet and had appeared depressed.

Citing the contents of the supposed suicide note, police probers said Triguero was blaming their poverty and her father for forcing her to work as a maid.

Trader falls in NBI raid

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation has arrested Arlene Uy, owner of IMA Credit Resources, and raided the firm's offices at Room 201, Port Area Building, National Road, Tunasan, Muntinlupa last Aug. 14.

Agents of the NBI Anti-Organized Crime Division collared Uy after several of her clients accused her of engaging in an investment scam.

Uy had failed to deliver on her promise to return 4 to 5 percent interest on her clients' P1.12-million investment and could not even return the money, the NBI claimed.

Foundation seeks donors to help boost PGH budget

By Tarra Quismundo

POOR patients will benefit from an increase in PGH funding.

JUST like anesthesiology and gynecology, philanthropy may well be considered another medical specialty.

And the Philippine General Hospital Medical Foundation, Inc. is open to doctors, companies, and anybody who would like to learn and practice it.

"We are tapping doctors, UP (University of the Philippines) medical alumni, big companies, politicians, and any philanthropic individuals to donate to the foundation," said foundation president Dr. Gregorio Alvior Jr., a retired obstetrician-gynecologist who practiced for 30 years in the United States.

The PGH Medical Foundation, established in August 1997 by a group of doctors and some community leaders, seeks to raise funds through donations to augment the government hospital's budget.

"There is a big gap between what the government is allotting for PGH and the amount that it really needs," Alvior said.

In a recent interview, PGH Director Juan Ma. Pablo Nañagas said the government gave the hospital P1 billion to cover all its expenses last year.

"But we had expenses of P1.3 billion. It's really not enough. So UP had to earn the P300 million that's lacking," Nañagas said.

Today, the foundation is launching its first fund-raising activity dubbed "Save a Life," which seeks to remedy the hospital's ailing finances.

"This fund-raising is aimed to create funds for medicine for indigent patients," Alvior said.

The retired doctor said this is the foundation's first public event, after six years of sleep.

The foundation has begun sending letters to politicians, drug companies and private individuals to solicit funds. "But very few have replied," said Alvior.

Man, nephew drown in rampaging river

A HIGH school student and his uncle, who tried to save him, drowned in Malabon City the other day as water rapidly rose in the Tullahan River due to the nonstop rains.

They have not been found as of yesterday.

Aljohn Escabo, 14, and a sophomore at the Potrero National High School, was playing in a dike at the back of their shanty at 158 East Riverside in Barangay Potrero. The dike runs along the swollen river.

His mother reportedly told him to get back inside the house but Escabo ignored her and continued playing.

A report from the Caloocan City Social Welfare and Development Department said Escabo slipped and fell into the rampaging river.

His uncle, Gerry Janipin, 38, tried to save Escabo but he, too, was swept by the strong current.

Water at the river rapidly rose about noon on Tuesday because of non-stop downpour, which began Monday afternoon.

Barangay tanods, the city police and local rescue volunteers, including other relatives of the victims, rushed to the riverside to help save the two.

But they also found it hard to swim and get through the victims because of the strong current. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

CPD chosen top police district

By Tina Santos

THE CENTRAL Police District was adjudged as the Best Police District in Metro Manila for the first quarter of the year, according to CPD Director Chief Supt. Napoloen Castro.

The winner was chosen based on intelligence work, crime prevention and crime solution capabilities, and management and administrative functions of police personnel, Castro said.

Supt. Rosendo Franco, CPD Deputy Director for operations, said the police district's street crime campaign includes the "Adopt-a-Barangay" program where cops conduct regular beat patrol in areas they have "adopted" to increase police visibility and intelligence build-up.

This way, Franco said, it would be easy for the lawmen to maximize barangay network which will eventually lead to the identification and arrest of criminals.

METROBRIEFS

Dead inmate

AN INMATE of the Manila City Jail was found dead yesterday inside his cell. Police identified the inmate as Plaridel Villa, 72, of BF Resort Village, Las Piñas, who had been on his eight month of detention for possession and use of illegal drugs. Investigation showed that a fellow inmate found Villa lying unconscious in his cell at 7:20 a.m. Villa was brought to the jail's infirmary, then rushed to the Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital where he was declared dead on arrival. Police said no external physical injuries were seen on Villa's body. *Leila Salaverria*

Gang leader falls

UNDERCOVER agents of the Western Police District scored a victory after arresting a notorious gang leader who is also the suspect in the abduction of a minor in Manila. Police said Francis Morales, 44, whom intelligence reports tag as the feared leader of a gang of armed men engaged in illegal activities, was arrested in Port Area, Manila, on Monday afternoon. The agents were tipped off on the presence of Morales in the Enchaw building in Port Area and immediately surrounded the area. Morales was charged with abduction and rape. No bail was recommended for him.

Leila Salaverria

Taguig shootout

A ROBBERY suspect died in a shootout with police in Taguig the other night. Insp. Cleto Seriosa, chief of the Taguig police investigation unit, identified the suspect as Jayson Bualan, of 107 Palanca St., Quiapo, Manila. Initial reports showed the shootout occurred around 7:30 p.m. along Mindanao Avenue in Maharlika Village. A concerned citizen had earlier called the police to report a man being held up by five men. The police immediately responded and engaged the suspects in a shootout, killing Bualan. The police are conducting follow-up operations against the remaining members of the gang. *Alcuin Papa*

Sigma Kappa Pi fete

THE U.P. Sigma Kappa Pi Fraternity will celebrate its 35th founding anniversary with a grand alumni homecoming and reunion on Aug. 30-31, 2003 at Villa Antonia, Miramonte Village, Los Baños, Laguna. Alumni brods are enjoined to call Brods Dante Gozum, 0917-471-8586; Lito San Antonio, 0918-901-4070; Joey Tañedo, 0919-415-7585; Jess Eliosida, 0916-749-2394; and Jess Toldoya, 0917-538-7599 for details.

Bicol students

THE BICOL Students Congress of the Philippines will hold a general assembly on Aug. 23, 2003, aimed at strengthening the unity of Bicolano students in Manila. The assembly will be held at the Adamson University Little Theater from 12 noon to 6 p.m. Participants are members of the organization from the different colleges and universities in Manila. Atty. Eduardo Castelo, adviser-BSCPI, and Jesse Rebustillo of the Philippine Daily Inquirer will be the speakers of the said event. For details, please call Rad Valenzuela at 09179908253 or Dennis Belmonte at 7525209.

Las Piñas jobs

ABOUT 2,000 residents of Las Piñas now have jobs under the "Trabaho para sa Mamamayan" program of Mayor Vergel "Nene" Aguilar during the first half of the year. Aguilar said more than 20 companies have participated in the job placement program organized by the city government under the Public Employment Service Office. Aguilar also said the Las Piñas Manpower Training Center has offered free vocational and entrepreneurial courses to help the poor get jobs.

Lacson refuses face-off with me

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

I woke up at 5 a.m. Tuesday for the "Magandang Umaga Bayan" show at ABS-CBN. I'm a night owl, so normally I don't wake up that early unless I have very important breakfast appointments.

I was invited to a face-off with Sen. Panfilo Lacson who was the program's main guest that morning. I was so excited at the prospect of a verbal tussle with my accuser that I didn't get enough sleep.

Lacson was at the main studio, while I would be in my house with the network's OB van. I was made to understand by the program's director that I could trade barbs with the "man of the hour" on his expose in the Senate where he implicated me in an alleged big money laundering case.

* * *

I was very disappointed because I didn't get to confront Lacson on TV. All that tossing and turning in bed, the loss of sleep due to the over-excitement was for nothing.

The program directors told me the senator didn't want to have a direct confrontation with me. They said he threatened to walk out if I would be inserted in the interview that was conducted by Edu Manzano, one of the program' s hosts.

I was only made to appear in the program more than 20 minutes after Lacson was gone.

* * *

That was typical of Lacson, the *berdugo* of notorious criminals, but afraid to confront law-abiding citizens he accuses of wrongdoing.

But what about all those reports about Lacson killing criminals in running gun battles? Oh, they're just media hype! I should know. I was one of those wide-eyed journalists in the 1970s and 1980s that took his stories about shootouts with criminals hook, line and sinker.

The stories painted Lacson as the Wyatt Earp of the Philippines. Wyatt Earp was a lawman in the Wild West who tamed criminals with his six-shooter.

* * *

But Lacson's stories about shootouts were just figments of his imagination.

The criminals whom he and his men supposedly killed were tied up when they were shot in cold blood.

Lacson is a coward, a craven coward.

* * *

When Lacson made those accusations on the floor of the Senate, it was reminiscent of those days when he shot criminals who could not fight back because their hands were tied.

He never gave me a chance to refute his accusations about me in a one-on-one face-off before TV cameras.

Ping, duwag ka!

* * *

Making accusations is one thing. Proving them is another.

It takes a complete man to say to a guy's face that he's a "certified extortionist."

Because he can't make the accusation—"certified extortionist" to my face, I accuse the senator of being "half-a-man."

If somebody said I was "half-a-man" to my face, the guy would have a bloodied nose.

* * *

His former superior and now nemesis Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya, said Lacson is a coward.

"*Hindi lalaban yan, Mon, ng harapan* (He won't fight you face to face). He'll shoot you when your back is turned on him or he'll have you killed by an assassin," said Berroya. "*Bakla yan, Mon* (He's gay)."

So, it's no longer His Honor, but His Gayness , Panfilo "Ping" Lacson.

* * *

A guy who never fights fair and square is not a real man.

A guy who shoots his enemy in the back is not a real man.

A politician who pummels his enemies and critics on the Senate floor under the protective wing of parliamentary immunity should not be trusted.

Would you trust a cowardly politician?

* * *

Take a look at Lacson's vanity kit that he always brings with him in his car. What do you find inside? Astringent, face powder, moisturizer, cologne, brush, blush-on, lip gloss.

How did I learn about this? From his close aides when we were still friends.

What does that make of him?

Most likely, Berroya is right. Most likely, my assessment of Lacson is right.

* * *

There is a new firearms dealer called Eastern Power and Ammunition Inc. Its offices are located on the ground floor of Bayview International Towers II, on Roxas Boulevard, Paranaque City.

So what?

Well, this company is owned by a Manila congressman, according to my sources in the firearms dealing industry, and he uses his position to sell his wares to government agencies, particularly the Philippine National Police (PNP).

The congressman is allegedly persistent in convincing government agencies to buy his guns. He calls their officials or pays them a visit.

That's unfair competition, some firearms dealers complain.

FOUR DIGIT
2 8 7 1
(In exact order)

SUERTRES
5 3 6

MEGALOTTO 6/45
14 15 18 22 28 44

METRO
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

Despite chaos, profits up

Bus operator says Edsa plan ups income 10 percent

By Margaux Ortiz

HERE is one reason for officials of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to smile: A bus operator yesterday said that the income of many transport companies went up 10 percent on Day One of the implementation of the Organized Edsa Bus Route.

Speaking for the Northeast Manila Bus Operators Group, Beth Mendoza, operator of Joyselle Express Inc., thanked the single dispatching system amid criticisms that it resulted in worse traffic on Edsa.

However, Mendoza's claims were based only on earnings for the morning of Aug. 18, when the scheme was first implemented.

"We could not say the same about Monday afternoon and Tuesday because the scheme was suspended during these days," Mendoza said.

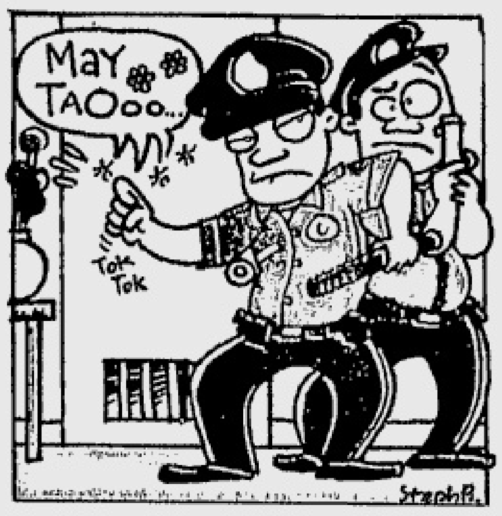
The Northeast Manila bus group operates 1,200 units on Edsa, the transport operator said.

She lamented that with the suspension of the scheme yesterday due to the rains, most of their buses ran half-empty on Edsa, minimizing their earnings and profits.

Mendoza confirmed the claims of MMDA officials that the queuing system assured their buses of more passengers.

For his part, MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said he and other officials of the agency were pleased that the scheme had worked in favor of the bus operators.

"We have yet to perfect the system, but we are getting there," Vergel de Dios said.



Toilet proved no refuge for rob suspects

By Leila B. Salaverria

A TOILET can be a place of comfort and refuge in times of need, but it was of little help to three robbery suspects who tried to use it as a sanctuary in Manila before dawn yesterday.

It was 1:30 a.m. when Norberto Ambrocio, 18, of San Pascual Street; John Carlo Ocampo, 18, of Remedios Street; and Antonio Hilario, 20, of Paco, all in Manila, held up Abegail Dimacali, Ramelou Mangampat and Tomas Filler along Nakpil Street, Malate.

The suspects grabbed the victims' bags, wallets and jewelry worth P4,500 before fleeing on foot.

Unshaken, the victims sought the help of Western Police District Station 5 operatives who quickly launched a manhunt.

The victims saw the trio along F. Agoncillo Street but the suspects fled prompting policemen to run after them.

The chase ended at the corner of Agoncillo and San Antonio Street, where lawmen found the three suspects crammed inside a public toilet, where they had tried to hide.

Charges of robbery were prepared against them.

OFFICIALS REACT

Secret marshals: 'Good idea' at the 'right time'

By Margaux Ortiz

BINAY

A GOOD idea.

That was how Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, a former human rights lawyer, described the "secret marshal" type deployment of policemen on public buses in the city.

The term "secret marshal" had been previously given to undercover lawmen who became notorious for killing robbery suspects that preyed on jeepney and bus passengers during the martial law years.

Maybe, Binay said, the current covert operations of the police in Makati could change the negative connotation of the name.

The mayor noted the foiled bus robbery on Sunday, during which a policeman shot and killed an armed suspect who had pointed his gun at passengers.

"I think the concept is good," Binay said.

"*Hiningi lang ng pagkakataon yung pagkakapatay* (The killing was incidental)," he added.

The mayor disclosed that plainclothes policemen had been secretly monitoring Makati buses for a month now.

And with the initial success of the operation, Binay said robbers would now think twice before again preying on bus passengers.

"Now that these secret marshals are around, the number of bus robberies would surely go down," he said.

Meanwhile, Integrated Metro Bus Operators Association president Claire dela Fuente, who owns buses plying the Makati route, said the deployment of the secret marshals was timely.

She said they had long been requesting for protection from the police because of past incidents where drivers, conductors and passengers were killed by armed robbers.

Makati roads rerouted for Ninoy rites today

IF YOU are passing through Makati City today, take note of this rerouting plan which will be implemented in relation to the commemoration of the 20th death anniversary of Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

Starting 1:30 p.m., the stretch of Ayala Avenue from Makati Avenue to Gil Puyat (formerly Buendia) Avenue will be closed to vehicular traffic.

Paseo de Roxas from the corner of Makati Avenue to Ayala Avenue will also be closed to motorists. Vehicles will not be allowed to cross Ayala from Rufino (formerly Herrera) Street.

Public utility vehicles are advised to take the following routes:

Buses entering Ayala from Edsa should make a right turn at Makati Avenue and left at Gil Puyat.

Jeepneys from J.P. Rizal should pass through Makati Avenue, turn left at Paseo de Roxas, left again at Gil Puyat Avenue before making a right back to Makati Avenue or Ayala Avenue Extension.

Jeepneys from Ayala going to Washington should turn left at Makati Avenue, right at A. Arnaiz, right at Amorsolo, left at VA Rufino, then right at Washington.

The roads will be opened immediately after the ceremony, which will start at 2:30 p.m.

Before the event, former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos will join President Macapagal-Arroyo and other government officials at the corner of Buendia Avenue and Ayala Avenue.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, 2nd District Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino and other personalities who took part in the struggle to bring down the Marcos dictatorship will converge in front of Rustan's on Ayala Avenue. *Margaux Ortiz*

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Notice is hereby given that the final draw has been held in the presence of an independent auditor, KPMG, Certified Public Accountant, and a DTI Representative on August 14, 2003 at the office of Reader's Digest in Hong Kong. All winners will be notified by registered mail. In case of query please contact us at P. O. Box 1612 Makati Central Post Office 1256 Makati City.

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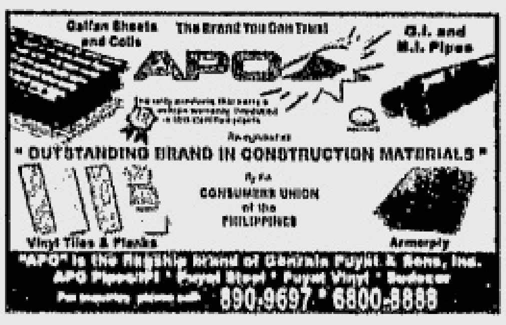
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LAS VEGAS SHOWDOWN

Pacquiao fights Barrera Nov. 15

PACQUIAO: Guaranteed a whopping P24.8 million. VAL HANDUMON

By Salven L. Lagumbay

IT'S a go for the mega-showdown!

In a match-up of titanic proportions, IBF superbantamweight king Manny Pacquiao wagers his reputation against the planet's finest featherweight, Marco Antonio Barrera of Mexico, over 10 rounds on Nov. 15 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

After weeks of negotiation, the 24-year-old southpaw Pacquiao, through his representative Rod Nazario, finally agreed to go up against Barrera for a whopping $450,000 (P24.8 million), a well-informed INQUIRER source in the United States reported.

But Pacquiao, who has a 37-2-1 record with 29 KOs, will not stake his IBF crown against the 29-year-old Barrera, nicknamed by US fight magazines as the "Baby-faced Assassin."

"Pacquiao has already been informed about the fight. He was ecstatic on learning that it has been arranged," the source said.

Barrera, the 5-foot-7 ring idol from Iztacalco, Mexico, boasts a 57-3 win-loss record, with 40 knockouts. Two of his losses came at the hands of Junior Jones in 1996 and 1997.

His third defeat came in his first meeting with Erik Morales in a WBC/WBO superbantam unification duel on Feb. 19, 2000.

But many boxing observers thought Barrera should have won the fight. The controversial decision prompted the World Boxing Organization to "re-award" the belt to Barrera.

Barrera is known for being the first man to inflict losses on previously undefeated champions.

In April 2001, the Mexican shamed Britain's IBO featherweight champ Prince Naseem Hamed, who had entered the ring toting a 35-win card, 31 by knockout.

Barrera also beat Erik Morales, who was unscathed before their 2002 fight for the WBC featherweight crown.

The Mexican's camp earlier insisted that Barrera and Pacquiao battle it out at 128 lb, but Nazario—emphasizing that Pacquiao is a natural 122-pounder—insisted on 126 lb.

Pacquiao is keeping himself in shape at the Almendras Gym in Davao City.

GOMA'S GIFT: Actor and versatile athlete Richard Gomez (carrying his daughter Juliana) and veteran shooter Joey Valdes III show off the silver medals they won at the recent Singapore Shooting Festival in the Lion City. The Philippine Airlines-sponsored Gomez and Valdez were part of the national team that finished second in the trap event. ROGER MARGALLO

Sanchez catches Paragua in lead

Standings after round 6:
5.0 points—IM Mark Paragua, IM Joseph Sanchez, GM Artur Kogan (ISR), IM Yuri Gonzales (CUB), IM Rodney Perez (CUB), IM Frank Dela Paz (CUB); 4.5— GM Sergei Tiviakov (NED), GM Ivan Ivanisevic (SCG), GM Viktor Moskalenko (UKR), GM Jordi Magem Badals (SPA), GM Jose Luis Fernandez Garcia (SPA), GM Davor Komljenovic (CRO), IM Roland Berzinsh (LAT), IM Petr Velicka (CZE), Dmitry Frolyanov (RUS).

FILIPINO Joseph Sanchez posted his fifth straight win at the expense of fellow IM Pavel Skatchkov of Russia to join compatriot Mark Paragua and four others at the top after six rounds of the 1st International Del Solsones chess championship yesterday at the Solsona gymnasium in Spain.

Sanchez continued his recovery from a first round loss to Paragua. He has 5 points in a tie with Paragua, GM Artur Kogan of Israel and IMs Yuri Gonzales, Rodney Perez and Frank Dela Paz of Cuba.

Paragua settled for a truce with 4th seed GM Artur Kogan.

Seventh round matches pit Paragua against Perez and Sanchez against Gonzales. *With a report from Marlon Bernardino*

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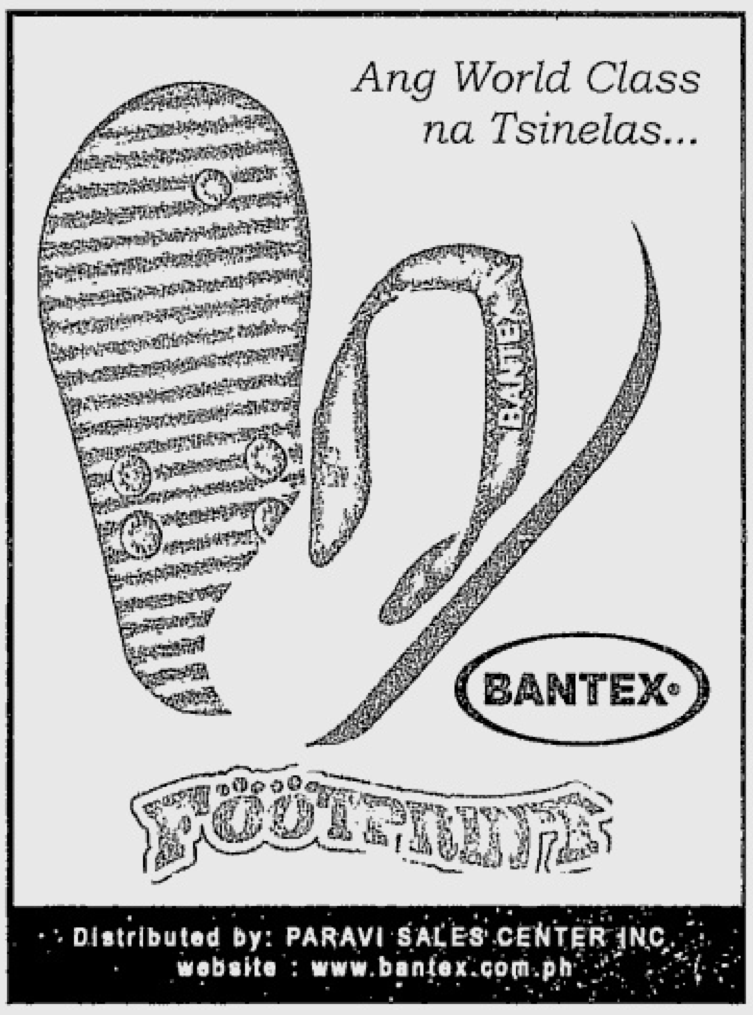
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318i Limousine	2003	Steel Gray	5k	1,900,000	1,855,000
318i Limousine	2003	Titanium Silver	8k	1,875,000	1,820,000
318i Executive	2003	Titanium Silver	11k	1,975,000	1,950,000
325i	2003	Titanium Silver	10k	2,600,000	2,550,000
325i	2003	Titanium Silver	3k	2,700,000	2,650,000
525i	2002	Titanium Silver	17k	2,775,000	2,750,000
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320i	1997	Alpine White	34k	850,000	835,000
318tds	1996	Titanium Silver	52k	900,000	875,000
523i	1996	Dunkel Blue	52k	1,450,000	1,425,000
523i	1997	Dunkel Blue	57k	1,600,000	1,525,000
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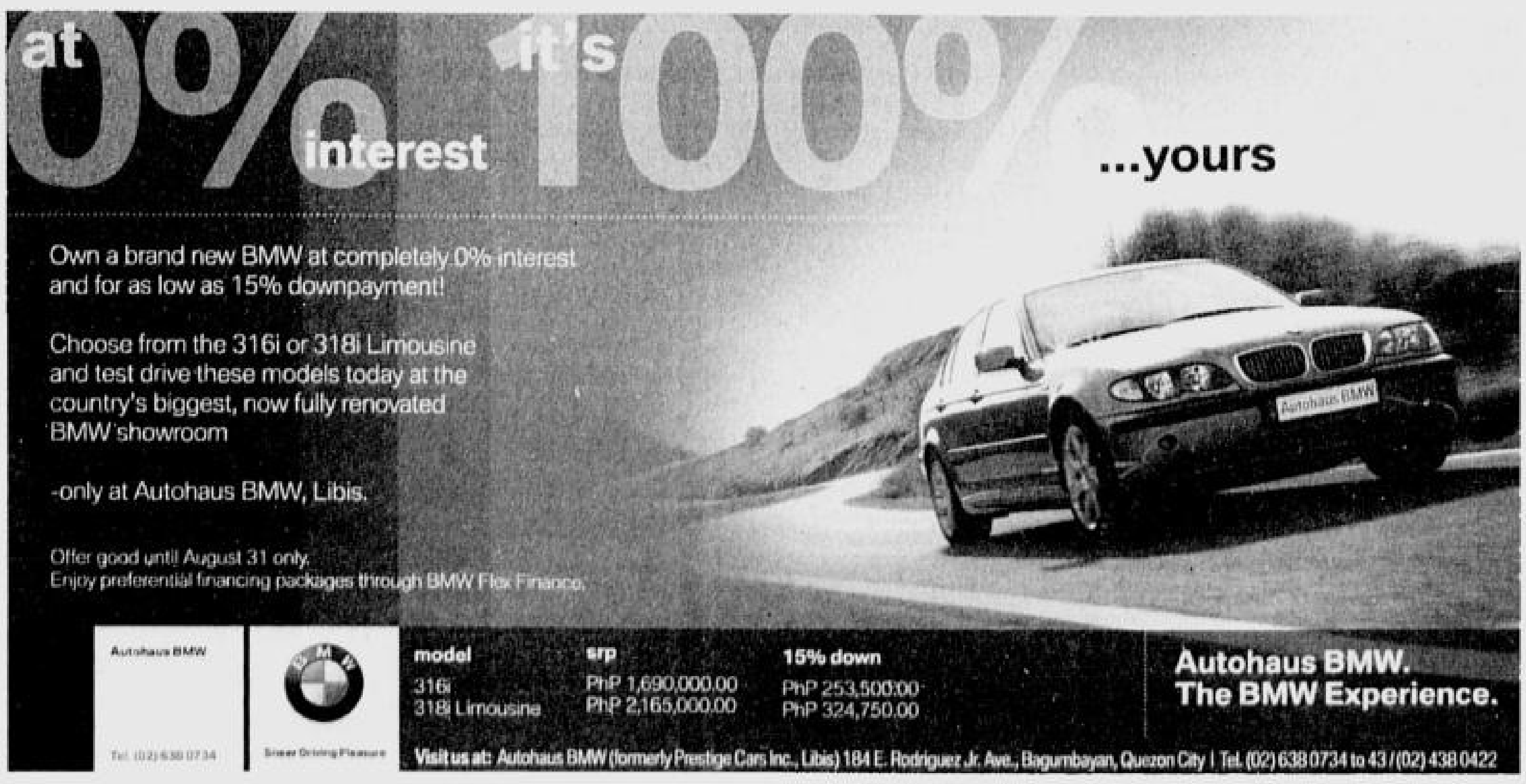
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RP five bucks slow start, rips Thais

By Marc Anthony Reyes

KUALA LUMPUR—The Philippines overcame a jittery start to rout Thailand, 83-56, Tuesday night in a rousing start to their campaign in the Southeast Asian Basketball Championships at the Malaysian Basketball Association gym here.

Except for an error-filled first half, the Cebuana Lhuillier-sponsored Filipinos showed their superior skills against the Thais.

Trapped in a maze of errors and missing shots mostly from point-blank range, the Filipinos couldn't get their offensive going and trailed the Thais, 24-23, halfway through the second period.

But the Nationals got into their rhythm after that, and forays by PBL stars Emmerson Oreta and Gary David sparked an 11-0 attack that gave the Filipinos the lead for good, 34-24.

The 6-foot-3 Oreta scored at the end of a pair of fastbreaks as he combined with the hot-shooting 6-foot-2 David in a blistering 9-0 RP run that eventually broke the backs of the Thais, 76-48.

The Philippines thus moved into a strong position to rule the round-robin event which rewards the top finisher with the crown outright.

The Filipinos were to face Vietnam late last night before going up against Malaysia, which won over the Vietnamese, 90-75, in the other opening-day tussle.

"It took the boys sometime to focus on the game," said RP coach Aric del Rosario. "I told them to relax and not try to win it right away."

A jumper by Dilip Rai with 4:48 left in the second period put the Thais ahead, 24-23, and silenced the side of the gallery that was made up mostly of Filipino workers and students.

But David, who plays for Montana in the PBL, hit a three-pointer and then scored on a fastbreak to keep the Thais at bay.

Oreta, coach Del Rosario's former go-to guy at the University of Santo Tomas, then hit back-to-back layups, before former Far Eastern hotshot Celino Cruz capped the run with a jumper to give the Philippines that 34-24 cushion.

With the Nationals safely ahead, David, Jean Marc Pingris and Nelbert Omolon took turns attacking the shaded lane while shutting out the Thais in the first six minutes of the fourth period.

Scores:

RP 83—David 24, Oreta 14, Melencio 10, De Ocampo 7, Calimag 7, Cruz 6, Sotto 6, Omolon 6, Pingris 3, Madrid 0, Franco 0.

THAILAND 56—Chainarong 10, Piroon 9, Wichai 8, Taweesak 7, Pongsiri 6, Rai 6, Kedum 4, Parinya 4, Sarthiyakul 2, Natdanai 0, Prach 0, Thiti 0.

Bombers top Cards; Stags win

GAMES TOMORROW *(Rizal Coliseum)*
11:30 a.m.—Letran vs CSB (Jrs/Srs)
4 p.m.—SBC vs UPHR (Srs/Jrs)

By June Navarro

MARCO Paolo Fajardo sizzled from the three-point range in overtime to lift the Jose Rizal Heavy Bombers to an 82-77 victory over the Mapua Cardinals last night in the NCAA basketball tournament at the Rizal Coliseum.

The flashy Fajardo accounted for 10 of the Bombers' 11 points in the extra period, including two consecutive triples that broke the backs of the Cardinals and gave Jose Rizal a share of second place with the San Sebastian Stags at 7-4.

Fajardo turned in a double-double performance, scoring a team-high 25 points on top of 10 rebounds and six assists.

The Stags outlasted Philippine Christian University, 82-75, in the first senior game.

Mark Borboran led the Bombers' assault from 14 points down in the closing minutes of regulation, hitting eight straight points, including back-to-back three-pointers.

But Mapua's Jeff Gonzales spoiled Jose Rizal's party with a putback with four ticks left, sending the roller-coaster game into overtime.

The Cardinals, who dropped to a 4-6 slate, simply lost steam in the extension period, with playmaker Jeffrey Martin fumbling twice.

Ren Vicente, lean but mean at 6-foot-1, unloaded 11 of his 14 points in the third period as the sluggish defending champion Stags finally moved ahead, 61-51.

Christopher Baluyot and Leomar Najorda preserved Vicente's heroics with clutch baskets and nullified the fiery Dolphins windup behind Robert Sanz.

"I thought I wouldn't be fielded in by coach Turo (Valenzona). So when I got my chance, I poured it all," said Vicente in Pilipino.

Sanz hit 30 points, eight of them coming in the last eight minutes.

Rookie Carlos Cecilia's pair of freethrows made it 70-74, but Najorda scored on a putback and Baluyot sank his charities to put the Stags out of reach, 78-70, with barely a minute left.

The Dolphins absorbed their fifth straight loss and plunged to the cellar with a 3-8 record.

Scores:

Second game (Srs)

SSC-R 82—Najorda 17, Vicente 14, Baluyot 14, Gonzales 9, Moore 9, Uy 8, Aguilar 6, Lim 2, Rebuya 2, Maneclang 1, Santos 0.

PCU 75—Sanz 30, Roque 15, Retaga 9, Garrido 8, Cecilia 4, Salangsang 2, Belga 2, Benitez 2, Castro 2, Acraman 0, Senining 0.

Quarters: 18-22, 32-34, 61-51, 82-75

Third Game (srs)

JRU 82—Fajardo 22, Borboran 17, Attunaga 14, Santos 13, Te 10, Jorge 4, Lindaya 2, Ngo 0, Domangcas 0, Serios 0, De Vera 0.

MIT 77—Guevarra 23, Cruz 17, Oula 10, Martin 9, Beranga 5, Gonzales 4, Salud 4, Sumalinog 3, Co 2, David 0, Migraso 0, Gorospe 0, Del Rosario 0.

Quarters: 13-13, 27-34, 48-57, 71-71.

MAPUA'S Christian Guevarra drives past Jose Rizal's Edward Attanaga in their NCAA game yesterday. RUDY ESPERAS

Tams play Bulldogs; Eagles face Falcons

GAMES TODAY *(Blue Eagle Gym)*
1:30 p.m.—NU vs FEU (srs)
4 p.m.—Adamson vs Ateneo (srs)
6 p.m.—Adamson vs Ateneo (jrs)

STANDINGS	W	L
FEU	7	1
Ateneo	6	2
La Salle	5	3
UE	5	3
Adamson	4	4
UST	3	5
UP	1	7
NU	1	7

FAR EASTERN seeks to strengthen its hold on the solo lead when it battles National University, but focus will be on titleholder Ateneo which tackles Adamson today in the UAAP men's basketball tournament at the Blue Eagle Gym.

"Adamson is a dangerous team," said Ateneo coach Joel Banal. He expects the Falcons to go all out to halt their string of 11 straight losses to the Eagles.

The Falcons recorded their last win against the Eagles, 54-52, on Sept. 19, 1997 at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

"It will cost us dearly if we take this game for granted," Banal added.

The Adamson-Ateneo clash is set 6 p.m., after the 4 p.m. National-Far Eastern tussle.

The Tamaraws, who are alone on top with a 7-1 mark, are expected to breeze through against the Bulldogs who man the cellar with a 1-7 slate.

Ateneo has won its last six outings and the Eagles are determined to keep the teams trailing it in the standings at bay by beating the Falcons.

The Eagles' recent victim were the UE Warriors, 76-67, last week and Banal's wards look ready to repeat their 70-62 win over the Falcons last July 31. *Dennis U. Eroa*

A word from Jordan's trainer

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I CAME across a feature story yesterday centering on Tim Grover, Michael Jordan's personal trainer. Written by Bob Condor, the piece mentioned Tiger Woods as one of Grover's customers. Jordan hired Grover to create a fitness regimen that would help him withstand the relentless pounding of NBA play. Grover also trains Scottie Pippen and Ron Harper.

Here are some of Grover's thoughts:

LOSE THE ATTITUDE: "Guys in their 20s think their bodies are indestructible. They neglect to do any sort of warm-up or cooldown. A bad habit starts right there. Research shows that most injuries occur in the first or last six minutes of a workout or game. The proper warm-up will protect against most mishaps, especially if you recognize and attend to potential trouble spots. Before you engage in physical activity, you should skip rope or do moderate aerobic activity to break a light sweat. Your muscles will then be warm enough for a stretching routine. Make the effort to stretch, even if it cuts into your time on the track and court.

PLAY THE GAME: There's no excuse in the weight room that correlates directly to your sport. If you want to improve your basketball shot or tennis serve, or golf swing, you have to get on the court or golf course. A bench press has nothing to do with athletic performance. Weight training has its place, though, and that's in building a foundation of power and strength. It also guards against injuries. The squat, for instance, does more than provide a focal point for muscle heads at the gym. It stabilizes your lower body and torso.

SPEAKING OF GOALS: Every workout should have a goal. The first A in Attack Athletics Inc. stands for ambition. Grover insists on specific goals for all his clients, who include the NBA's Grant Hill, Kevin Garnett, Juwan Howard and Michael Finley, plus golf's Woods. Your goal may be as simple as a certain number of repetitions or making fewer unforced errors than in the last racquetball match. But Grover promises your training results will zoom if you set a definite target.

SMART THINKING: Current exercise research shows that the brain is a terrible thing to waste during a workout. Athletes who think about the muscles being worked develop their physiques faster, stronger and bigger than control groups who let their minds wander. Grover admits it can be difficult—maybe even boring—to think about your muscles constantly during workouts. He recommends that you consider the muscles with each new lift or stretch and remind yourself every few minutes. Make a commitment to concentrate on muscles worked during at least one session per week.

BE FREE: Weight machines are good for beginners and for top athletes getting into peak shape. Machines can help strengthen injured areas, such as a cranky lower back, without risk. But I suggest that everyone use free weights whenever possible. Free weights work more muscles, especially stabilizer muscles that you use every day, whether you're moving furniture or negotiating moguls on a double-diamond run. Weight machines isolate muscles. You can throw your body out of alignment with too much work on certain muscles in the upper body or legs. Free weights minimize that risk and encourage good posture and better balance.

IT AIN'T ABOUT HEAVY: Not only competition bodybuilders should lift heavy weights. The rest of us would do ourselves a favor by cutting our current weight amounts in half, then doing more repetitions with proper form. Once you master technique, set goals to lift a certain number of reps in an appointed amount of time rather than increasing the weight. After you reach the time goals, then increase the weight. This plan encourages quickness and body control.

There you have it, fellas, I'll give you more of Grover's mind in the future. Meanwhile, do you know where I lifted this piece? *Playboy* magazine. It's now a collector's item as it was published in December 1998, with gold medal ice skater Katarina Witt gracing its cover. Witt's nude photos appear inside.

Umm. Need I say more?

SPORTSWATCH

La Salle, San Beda cagers triumph

REIGNING TITLISTS La Salle Greenhills and San Beda maintained their dominance in the Milo BEST SBP/Passerelle tournament last weekend by routing their respective rivals at the Xavier School courts. La Salle routed Xavier School, 60-41, for its fifth straight Group A win of the ABP division, while San Beda ripped Lourdes School QC, 99-53, to make it four in a row in Group A of the Passerelle competition. The other results: SBP—Xavier d. Paref-Northfield, 85-15; Notre Dame of Greater Manila d. San Beda, 53-45, and Don Bosco Makati, 59-49; Ateneo d. Dayspring Academy, 93-1; Marist School d Paref-Northfield, 71-28; JASMS d. Lourdes School (QC), 56-24; De La Salle Zobel d. Lourdes School 9Mandaluyong), 52-48.

Buena Vista badminton clinic

BADMINTON is one sport more and more Filipinos are getting into. One organization that is helping promote it is Buena Vista Nature Park & Country Club located in Tagaytay. On Aug. 22, 23, 24, from 8-4 p.m., Buena Vista will be hosting the Buena Vista Badminton Clinic & Family Day. There will be classes for beginners as well as intermediate classes for more experienced players. The badminton clinic will be conducted by renowned trainer Pascual Tupas. Buena Vista Nature Park & Country Club is the newest project of the Ledesma Development Corporation. Those interested in joining the badminton clinic and family day may call 845-0458 or 887-0659 and ask for Ms Joy Fernando.

Blaze rally visits Sierra Madre

THE SECOND round of Blaze Rallye Rizal will traverse the Sierra Madre mountain ranges in Montalban, Rizal on Saturday. Six special stages covering a total of 45 kilometers have been laid out to test the skills of the country's best rallye drivers. Rally rookie Ivan Isada and co-driver Art Guevarra of Team Ultron will try to duplicate their first round victory on July 12. Challenging them are 10-time national rally champion Vip Isada and navigator Robbie Hermoso, as well as the team-up of Cano Gutang and Choi Mabunay. The ceremonial flag off will be at 7:30 p.m. today at Petron Greenhills along Edsa corner Connecticut Street. For information, call Activity Asia Association at 372-7374.

Faith to host chess simul by GMs

A CHESS simultaneous exhibition by grandmasters Eugene Torre, Joey Antonio and Bong Villamayor will be held at the First Asia Institute of Technology and Humanities (Faith) in Tanauan City, Batangas, on Sept. 7. The event, to be organized by the Active Chess Center of Asia, will form part of the celebrations of the third founding anniversary of Faith and will also launch the first Calabarzon Chess Circuit.

Zamboanga hosts Go for Goal

tZAMBOANGA CITY—Reigning titlist Zamboanga City State Polytechnic Colleges shut out Ateneo de Zamboanga University, 7-0, in the local Coke Go for Goal under 16 football eliminations recently at the sports complex here. Royvette Ruiz, Cresencio Malbarosa, Mark Marco, Leonido Jomorie, Jusmin Linapo, Ennidiad Bowin and Patrick Pagente scored one goal each for Zamboanga Polytechnic in the tournament sanctioned by the Philippine Football Federation and sponsored by Coca-Cola Export Co. Other teams entered are Zamboanga City High, Filipino-Turkish Tolerance High, Don Pablo O. Lorenzo Memorial National High, Zamboanga National High (Taluksangay, Ayala and West), Western Mindanao State University and Claret High.

La Salle rules Samsung football

DE LA Salle University exploded with three goals in the last nine minutes to rout Alumnae Football Club, 5-2, and capture the Samsung Ladies Open football cup at the Nomads pitch in Merville, Parañaque on Sunday. Exploiting Alumnae's tired legs and disjointed backline, Patty Silva sparked La Salle's onslaught with her second goal in the 81st minute. Inna Alejandro, DLSU's top grosser and strikar, then beat four defenders for a 4-2 lead as rookie Gia Yusi wrapped up the match with another goal before the final whistle. Alumnae took the early lead through striker and RP U-10 shoo-in Clarissa Lazaro before Andrea Yang knotted the count on a probing free-kick in the 33rd minute. Silva opened the second half scoring with a well-placed strike in the 49th, but during a ping-pong scramble in front of the DLSU goal in the 58th minute, an own goal brought Alumnae FC back into the contest, 2-2. FEU beat UP, 2-1, for third place with two goals by Marigen Ariel (39th and 81st) against Rea Villa's lone goal in the 59th.

Abapo-Pacquiao bout reset

TOP-RANKED Ala Boy Bart Abapolenge suffered a nasty cut on his right eyelid during sparring the other day, causing his title challenge against RP junior lightweight champ Bobby Pacquiao to be moved to Sept 20. An uppercut from RP superbantam champ Jimrex Jaca opened a gash on Abapo's right eyelid, prompting GAB-licensed physician Jose Unabia to declare him unfit to go on with his Aug. 30 title challenge of Pacquiao at the Gaisano Countrymall. The bout between RP junior fly champ Bert Batawang and challenger Roger Jack Maldecir has also been moved to Sept. 20. Promoter Sammy "Don King" Gello-ani, however, assured fight fans that his Aug. 30 card would still push through, this time headlining Z Gorres and Sherwin Paro. *Salven Lagumbay*

Calauag Mr and Miss Sexy Bodies

CALAUAG, Quezon—Newcomers Camilo Soria Jr. and Joan Frenie Reyes topped their respective divisions in the recent Calauag Track and Field Association (Catafa) search for Mr. and Miss Sexy Bodies 2003 at the jam-packed town plaza covered court here. The 5-foot-4 Soria of Princess Gym in Gumaca, Quezon and the sultry Calauag-native Reyes of Power Haus Gym earned P2,000 plus trophies each for their victory in the men's and women's divisions. Second placers who took home P1,500 plus trophies were Joel Riformado of Hard Body Gym in Lopez, Quezon and Charmie Christine Red of Gumaca, Quezon's Princess Gym. Pre-tournament favorite Janice Afable and Reynante Luna, both of Calauag, pocketed P1,000 plus trophies for placing third. *Rey Danseco*

Victorino, Abadia lead Subic march of favorites

SUBIC—Second seed Joseph Victorino and third ranked Adelo Abadia scored easy wins yesterday to reach the third round of the P200,000 Cebuana Lhuillier Circuit 2 at the Subic Bay International Tennis Center indoor courts here.

Victorino, winner of the Philta Open last April, downed Dodie Magtanong, 6-3, 6-1, to advance against former national coach Beeyong Sison, who whipped junior standout Jandrick de Castro, 6-2, 6-2.

Abadia scored a 6-3, 6-1 victory over Joseph Arcilla, younger brother of top seed Johnny.

Fourth seed Rolando Ruel Jr., losing finalist in the Coca-Cola Open last May, beat Gilbert Estrada, 6-4, 6-2, to advance against No. 16 Patrick John Tierro of Olongapo City, who downed Michael Basco, 6-1; 6-0.

Sixth-seeded Jesse Lapore downed Nico Riego De Dios, 6-4, 6-1, and will next face No. 10 Pop Sabandon, 6-0, 6-4 winner over Lawrence Magaway. Unranked Ricky Catito of Davao City, who eliminated No. 8 Michael Mora III in the first round, beat Kyle Dandan, 6-1, 6-2.

NBA-powered Americans face tough Brazilians today

THE POWERFUL United States team goes up against tough Brazil today at the start of the Fiba Americas Olympic qualifying tournament in Puerto Rico.

Team USA will parade its NBA stars—including Tim Duncan, Jason Kidd, Tracy McGrady, Ray Allen, Allen Iverson, Jermaine O'Neal, Vince Carter and Mike Bibby—for the first time in the game against the Brazilians, on paper the second strongest side in Group A.

Solar Sports will telecast all three opening-day matches: USA vs Brazil at 7 p.m. on IBC-13 and Channel 29; Puerto Rico vs Uruguay at 5 p.m. on Channel 29; and Argentina vs Mexico at 9 p.m. on Channel 29.

GUN-POINTING INCIDENT

Horse owner denies jockey's claims

By Edwin Villanueva

THE PHILIPPINE Racing Commission yesterday vowed to get into the bottom of the alleged gun-pointing incident involving a horse owner and the jockey who disobeyed his order during a recent race at Santa Ana.

"We'll find out who's telling the truth," said Philracom chair Jimmy Dilag as the racing body heard the sides of Alfredo Po and Dennis Camañero at the start of its probe of the Aug. 9 incident.

Camañero alleged that Po poked a gun at him and threatened to kill him for failing to throw away a race aboard Po's galloper Top Quest.

In his sworn affidavit, Camañero said Po ordered him not to allow Top Quest to win the fifth race of the Aug. 8 card but he subverted it for fear of getting a one year suspension. Top Quest won as an extreme longshot.

Po, accompanied by his counsel, denied Camañero's allegations, saying he never instructed him to lose atop Top Quest.

Po also stressed that he did not point a gun on the jockey, using instead his cellular phone when he confronted the Class D jockey.

Dilag said the racing body will summon more witnesses when the hearing resumes next week.

"The reputation of the horse owners and the protection of the betting public are at stake here. We will not stop until we get into the bottom of that incident," said Dilag.

The Philracom conducted the probe upon the appeal of the Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners (Marho), the premier horse racing group in the country.

Marho chief Aristeo "Putch" Puyat had earlier written the Philracom, urging it to investigate the incident because "it is damaging the reputation of horse owners and tends to erode all efforts of the industry players to raise the level of public confidence in horse racing."

"Let's hope the probe produces positive results. We will wait for it to be completed," said Puyat.

Southwoods ladies ahead in Luzvimin

NEW RECRUIT Carmelette Villaroman sizzled with 52 points as Manila Southwoods jumped ahead by six points over Canlubang in yesterday's opening round of the 11th WGAP Luzvimin Invitational golf tournament at the Cebu Country Club course.

Southwoods, compiling 175 for the day, failed to pull away despite a well-balanced scoring with Lora Roberto contributing 48, Tracy Locsin adding 45 and either of the 30s of Arlette Dizon and Glenda Da Roza counting as the team's fourth score.

Canlubang showed up with just four players but came through with a bold challenge with their 169 total in the WGAP-organized event using the Molave system of scoring.

Former national players Lina de Guzman and Lucy Landicho combined for 101 points while Terry Parala (34) and Teresa Carpio (34) to be in solo second place.

Wack Wack, behind a 44-point effort by Liza Lopez, stood in third place with a 165, far ahead of the Del Monte squad (157). Defending champion Sta. Elena struggled with a 156 and fell 19 shots adrift.

Camp Aguinaldo surged ahead in the Pearl division after scoring a 127. Maline Flores carded 37 points and Malou Belandres tallied 36 to lead scoring for Aguinaldo. Belen Ampong and Artie Mediana both had 27s for the other Aguinaldo.

All set for Eaga meet

PUERTO PRINCESA, Palawan—The Indonesian delegation will be arriving today to compete in the third BIMP-Eaga Friendship Games which starts here Saturday.

The Indons are fielding in 157 athletes divided into three teams.

More than 400 athletes and officials coming from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines will take part in the event which is staged for the first time in five years in this bustling city.

The Philippines will be represented by two teams—Mindanao and Puerto Princesa.

Mayor Edward Hagedorn yesterday declared it's all systems go for the meet.

DAVENPORT returns a backhand to Dokic. AP

Davenport boots out Dokic

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut—Top-seeded Lindsay Davenport needed just 40 minutes to advance to the quarterfinals of the Pilot Pen, beating Jelena Dokic 6-2, 6-1 Tuesday night.

"It turned out to be a lot easier than I thought it would be," Davenport said. "I was expecting to play a long time out there because I know how tough an opponent she can be. I was expecting to be pushed a little more."

Davenport, ranked No. 4 in the world, had nine aces, including three in the final game of the first set. The unseeded Dokic committed several unforced errors and won just three points over the final three games.

Dokic, who has fallen from No. 4 in the world to 23rd in the past year, has lost all eight meetings with Davenport.

Others advancing to the second round on Tuesday were Magdalena Maleeva and Elena Dementieva.

Maleeva needed three sets and a 10-minute cool-down to hold off Tamarine Tanasugarn, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4. *AP*

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Desert Breeze 2. Road Runner 3. My Lucky One 4. Hector's Dream
Race 2—1. Andrei's Billiard 2. Rain Check
Race 3—1. Betruetome 2. Extreme Illusion 3. Treasured Medal 4. Well Noted
Race 4—1. Herculean Task 2. Blitzkrieg 3. Risen Free 4. Rosa Mystika 5. Wings of Magic
Race 5—1. Bring Home D Bacon 2. Top Mark 3. Miwa's Treasure 4. Sir Olizon
Race 6—1. Sealed With A Kiss 2. Premiere Stock 3. Standout 4. Pep Talk 5. Compañero
Race 7—1. Burning Light 2. Bumper to Bumper 3. Going Free 4. Lucky Dancer 5. Covert Lady/Royal Lantana
Race 8—1. Hurry King 2. Lucky Strike 3. Habagat 4. Wind Star 5. Rose and Toy
Race 9—1. Ounce of Gold 2. Night Flight 3. Magnanimous 4. Make Sure 5. Ride the Lightning 6. Regal Reality/Living Legend

Bonds helps Cards snap losing binge

SAN FRANCISCO—Barry Bonds hit his 651st home run leading off the 10th inning as San Francisco snapped its longest losing streak in three years with a 5-4 victory over Atlanta on Tuesday.

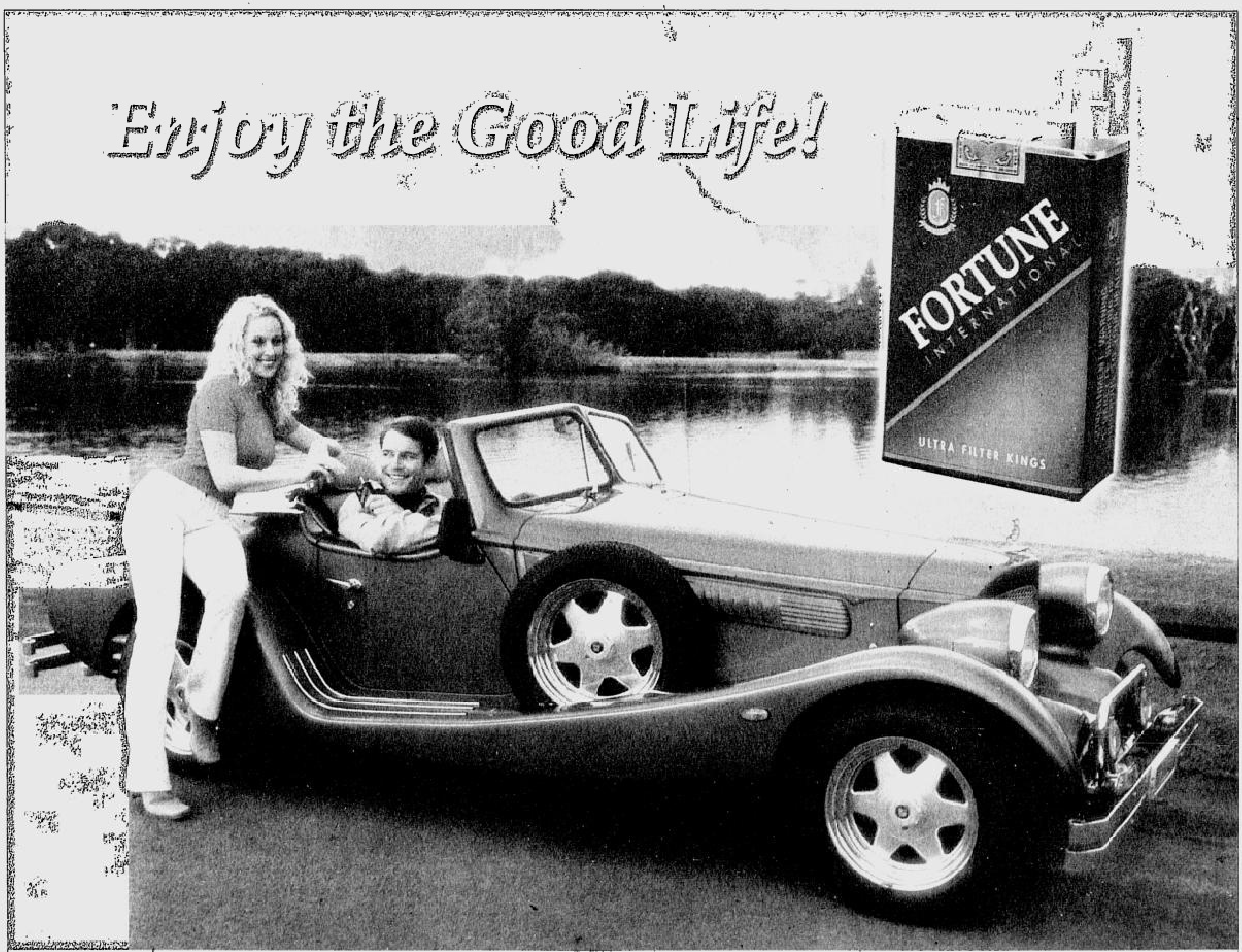
In his first game back since taking off the weekend series in Montreal to be with his ailing father Bobby, Bonds hit his major league-leading 38th homer on a 2-1 pitch from Ray King (3-2), giving the Giants their first win in seven games.

Bonds raised both arms in celebration and pumped his fist as he started his slow trot and watched his drive sail over the concourse in right and into McCovey Cove.

It was Bonds' eighth career game-winning home run.

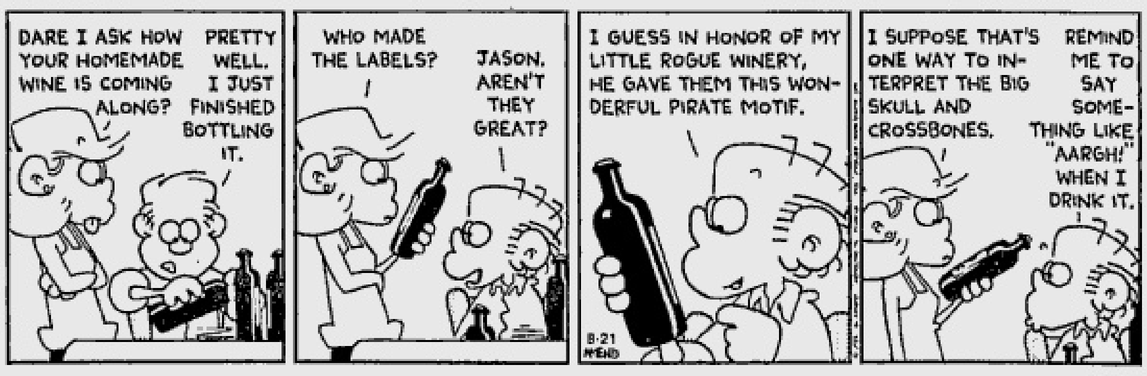
Jose Cruz, Jr. also homered for the Giants and Tim Worrell (4-3) pitched two innings.

Pinch-runner Todd Linden scored on a wild pitch with two outs from Trey Hodges in the eighth inning to tie the score at 4-all. *AP*

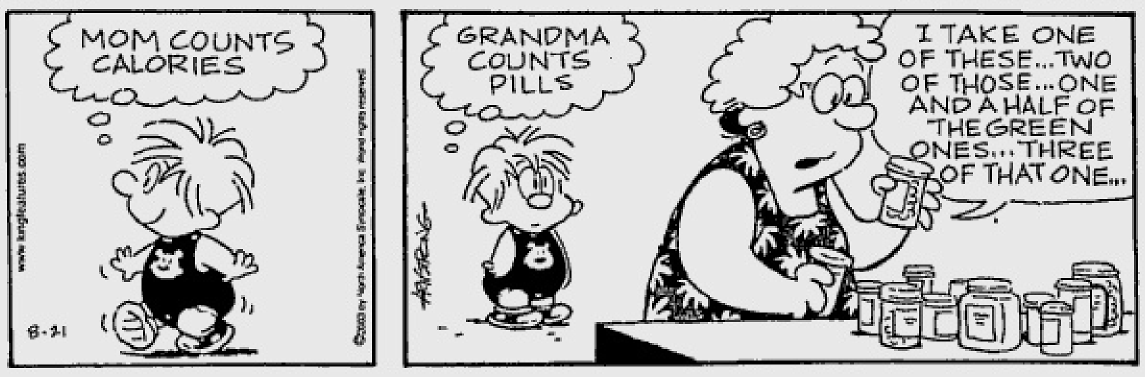


GOVERNMENT WARNING: Cigarette Smoking is Dangerous to Your Health.

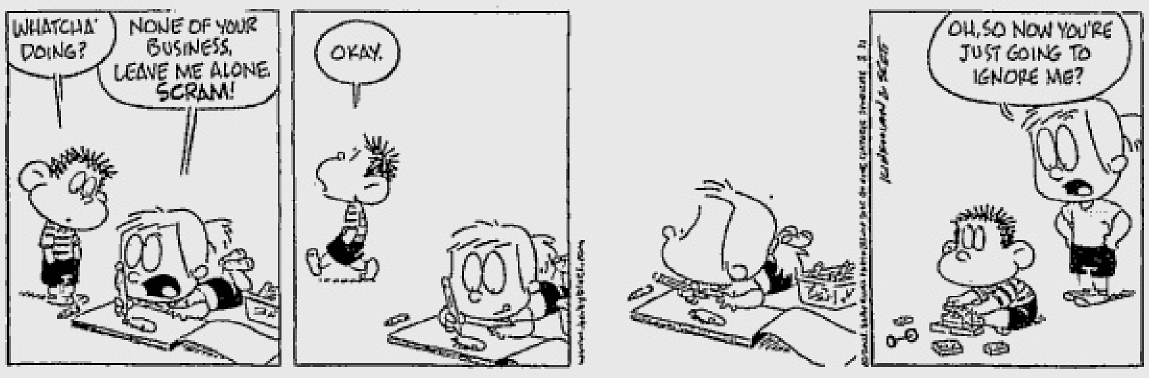
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


DARE I ASK HOW YOUR HOMEMADE WINE IS COMING ALONG?
PRETTY WELL. I JUST FINISHED BOTTLING IT.
WHO MADE THE LABELS?
JASON. AREN'T THEY GREAT?
I GUESS IN HONOR OF MY LITTLE ROGUE WINERY, HE GAVE THEM THIS WONDERFUL PIRATE MOTIF.
8-21 AMEND
I SUPPOSE THAT'S ONE WAY TO INTERPRET THE BIG SKULL AND CROSSBONES.
REMIND ME TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE "AARGH!" WHEN I DRINK IT.

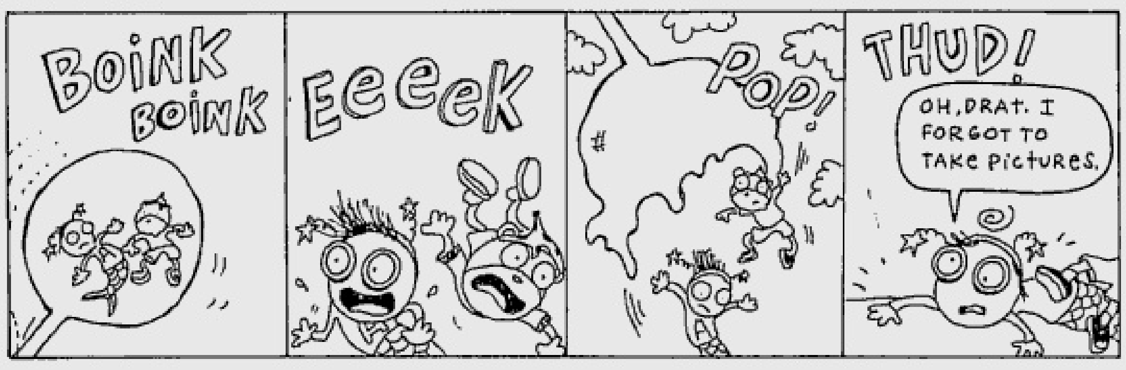
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


MOM COUNTS CALORIES
8-21
GRANDMA COUNTS PILLS
I TAKE ONE OF THESE...TWO OF THOSE...ONE AND A HALF OF THE GREEN ONES...THREE OF THAT ONE...

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


WHATCHA' DOING?
NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS. LEAVE ME ALONE. SCRAM!
OKAY.
OH, SO NOW YOU'RE JUST GOING TO IGNORE ME?

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


BoiNK BoiNK
EeeeK
POP!
THUD!
OH, DRAT. I FORGOT TO TAKE PICTURES.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are nurturing, caring, supportive and protective to your loved ones. Although you are very private, you are the rock in your family. Your private personality is often quite different from your public one. Fortunately, you will have more privacy in the year ahead, because you will be learning something important.
Birthdate of: Carrie-Anne Moss, actress; Kim Cattrall, actress; Alicia Witt, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): The pleasant bloom of yesterday continues today. However, you might be too demanding with someone now. Don't do it—it's not worth it.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): The generosity you feel with family members (and toward improving your home) might mushroom briefly into an obsession today. Chill out.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Have you ever noticed that some people are jealous if you're too happy? Don't get embroiled in an argument with a partner or close friend. The urge to do so passes quickly if you ignore it.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your eagerness to boost your earnings might make you almost ruthless in trying to make improvements at work today. Resist the urge to act this way.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Don't let your bright enthusiasm get tangled up in an argument with children or a romantic interest. Whatever displeases you will be gone quickly if you pay it no heed.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): For a brief two-hour window today (midday), you might become embroiled in a power struggle with a parent or an authority figure. Don't do it. Don't ruin your beautiful peace of mind.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Take extra precautions when driving today. In the middle of the day, you might feel compelled or obsessed about something, which could make you too hasty! Slow down and relax.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Avoid impulse buying today. You might become obsessed with an idea and convince yourself that you have to have something. (You're inclined to act this way at times.)

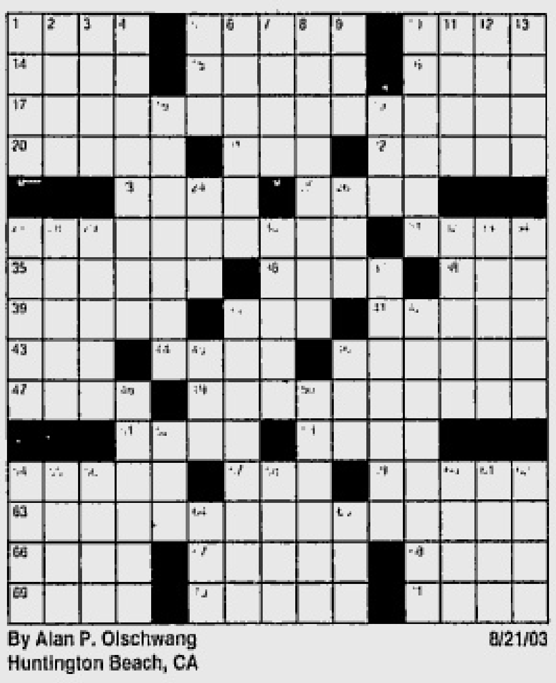
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Arguments with a partner or friend are temporary black clouds on your horizon. Don't give these arguments any energy. The feeling will pass very quickly anyhow. Just enjoy your overall good mood today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Don't be pushy about improvements you wish to see at work. If you wait a day or two, things will probably go your way. Just be patient.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your success in dealing with members of the public—and partners and close friends—could distract you so much that you feel impatient with children. If so, this is regrettable. Bite your tongue.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): It's important to know that fiery Mars in your sign makes you more aggressive than usual. Because of this, avoid arguments with authority figures and parents today.

DAILY CROSSWORD

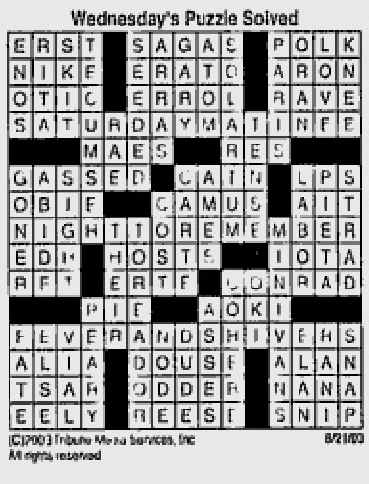


By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
8/21/03

ACROSS
1 Bing of basketball
5 Footlong containers
10 Lasso
14 Author Haley
15 Clues
16 Correct copy
17 "The Maltese Falcon" author
20 Ravi Shankar's instrument
21 Caustic substance
22 Heart spout
23 Ear flap
25 Take a break
27 "East of Eden" co-star
31 Times of note
35 Muse of astronomy
36 Spotted cavy
38 __ Khan IV
39 Nick of "The Prince of Tides"
40 Ameslan
41 Brads
43 112.5 degrees from S
44 Alone
46 Restaurant furniture
47 Drunkards
49 Washington State cornerback
51 Mote
53 Adolescent
54 Two-to-one, e.g.
57 Dutch commune
59 Loafs
63 William Legge's title
66 Let loose
67 Frankie or Cleo
68 Japan's first capital
69 Hightailed it
70 Plus
71 Took to court

DOWN
1 June celebrants
2 Lenin Peak's range
3 British undershirt
4 Clam's siphon
5 Haggard novel
6 Ancient rabbi
7 Sole
8 Airy
9 987-65-4321 grp.
10 Distant
11 River to the Baltic
12 Brad of "Seven"
13 Kelt of comics
18 Twists of fate
19 Mothers
24 Designer's deg.
26 & the rest
27 Allyson and Lockhart
28 University of Maine location
29 Male servant
30 __ salts
32 Marsh birds
33 Shoelace tip
34 Impudent
37 Angels' home
40 Shaded walkways
42 Forsakes
45 Spanish eye
46 Either part of a fly?
48 Left port
50 Ageless in poems
52 As well
54 Umps' cohorts
55 Seniors' grp.
56 Family follower
58 Rostrum
60 Feast on Oahu
61 To be in Toulon
62 Roe source
64 Ala. neighbor
65 Hanoi holiday

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved



E	R	S	T	■	S	A	G	A	S	■	P	O	L	K
N	I	K	E	■	E	R	A	T	O	■	A	R	O	N
O	T	I	C	■	E	R	R	O	L	■	R	A	V	E
S	A	T	U	R	D	A	Y	M	A	T	I	N	E	E
■	■	■	M	A	E	S	■	■	R	E	S	■	■	■
G	A	S	S	E	D	■	C	A	I	N	■	L	P	S
O	B	I	E	■	■	C	A	M	U	S	■	A	I	T
N	I	G	H	T	T	O	R	E	M	E	M	B	E	R
E	D	H	■	H	O	S	T	S	■	■	I	O	T	A
R	E	T	■	E	R	T	E	■	C	O	N	R	A	D
■	■	■	P	I	E	■	■	A	O	K	I	■	■	■
F	E	V	E	R	A	N	D	S	H	I	V	E	R	S
A	L	I	A	■	D	O	U	S	E	■	A	L	A	N
T	S	A	R	■	O	D	D	E	R	■	N	A	N	A
E	E	L	Y	■	R	E	E	S	E	■	S	N	I	P

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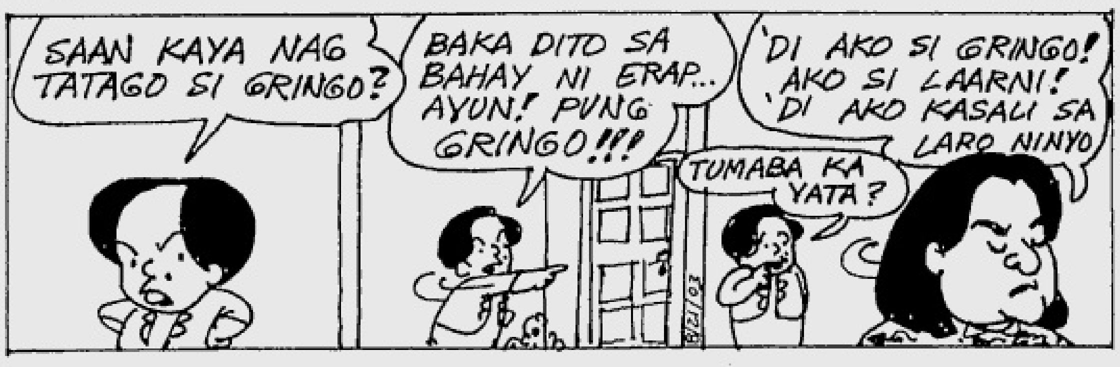
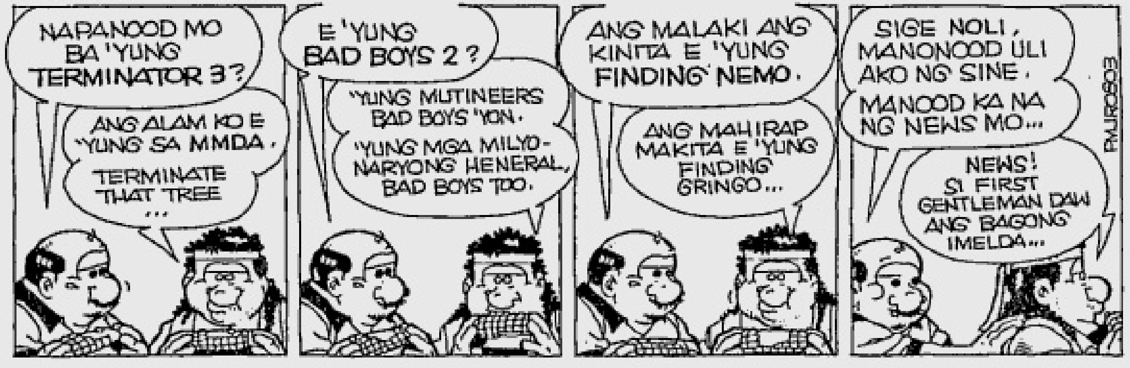
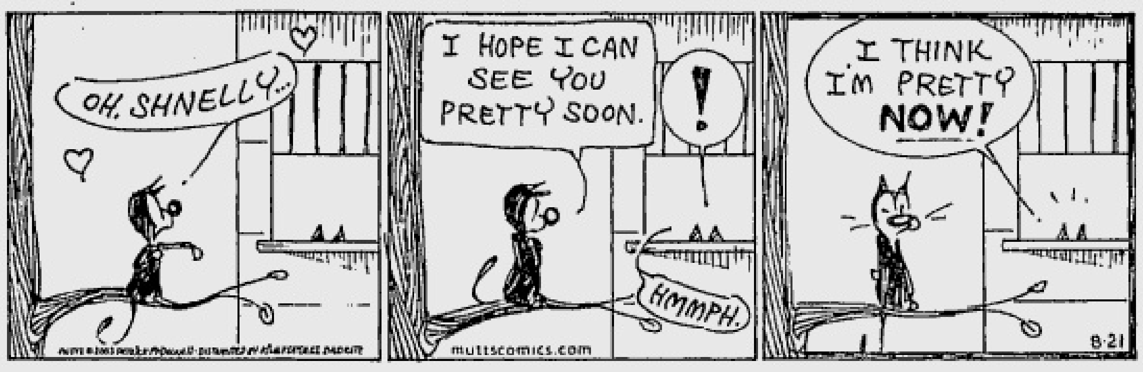
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


SAAN KAYA NAG TATAGO SI GRINGO?
BAKA DITO SA BAHAY NI ERAP.. AYUN! PUNG GRINGO!!!
TUMABA KA YATA?
'DI AKO SI GRINGO! AKO SI LAARNI! 'DI AKO KASALI SA LARO NINYO
8/21/03

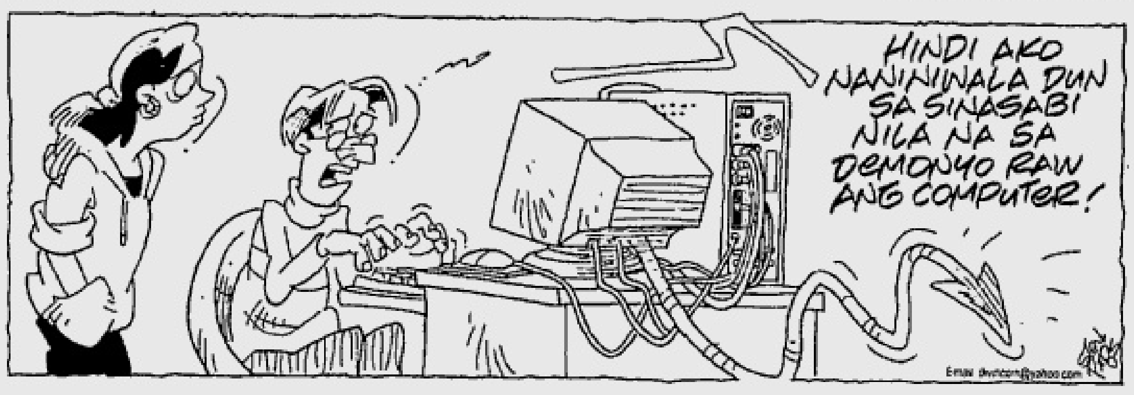
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAPANOOD MO BA 'YUNG TERMINATOR 3?
ANG ALAM KO E 'YUNG SA MMDA. TERMINATE THAT TREE ...
E 'YUNG BAD BOYS 2?
'YUNG MUTINEERS BAD BOYS 'YON. 'YUNG MGA MILYONARYONG HENERAL, BAD BOYS TOO.
ANG MALAKI ANG KINITA E 'YUNG FINDING NEMO.
ANG MAHIRAP MAKITA E 'YUNG FINDING GRINGO...
SIGE NOLI, MANONOOD ULI AKO NG SINE.
MANOOD KA NA NG NEWS MO...
NEWS! SI FIRST GENTLEMAN DAW ANG BAGONG IMELDA...
PMJR0803

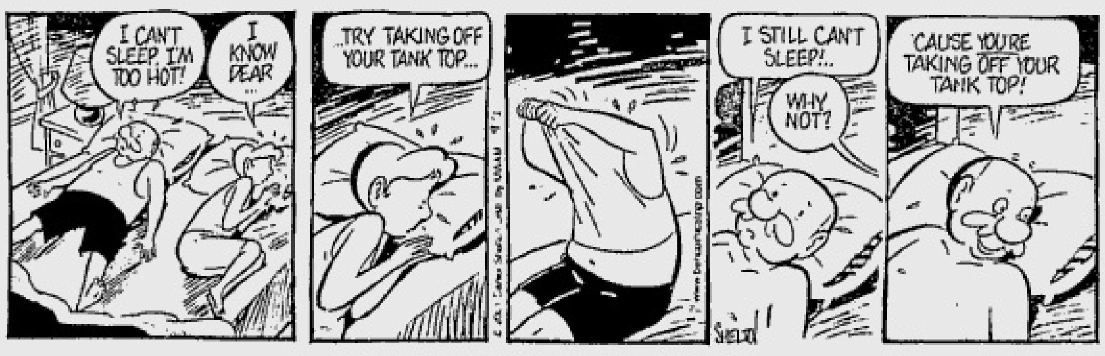
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


OH, SHNELLY...
I HOPE I CAN SEE YOU PRETTY SOON.
!
HMMPH.
mutts comics.com
I THINK I'M PRETTY NOW!
8-21

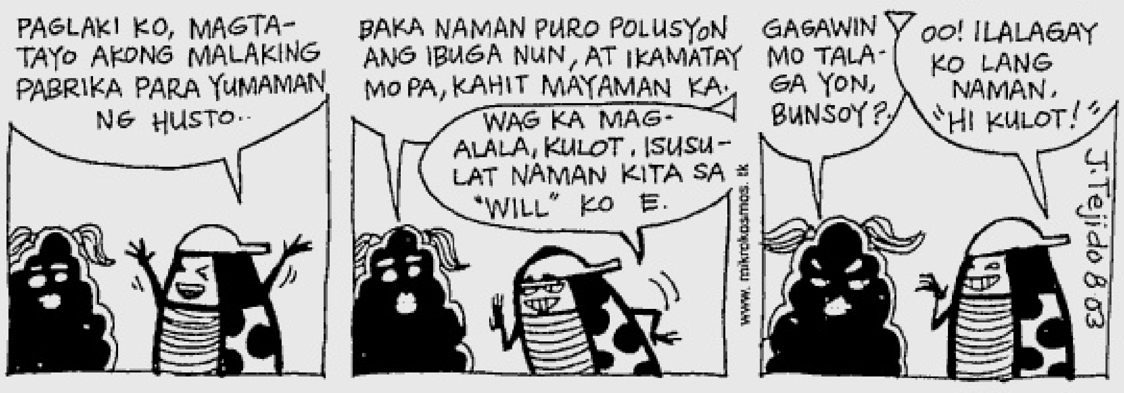
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


HINDI AKO NANINIWALA DUN SA SINASABI NILA NA SA DEMONYO RAW ANG COMPUTER!

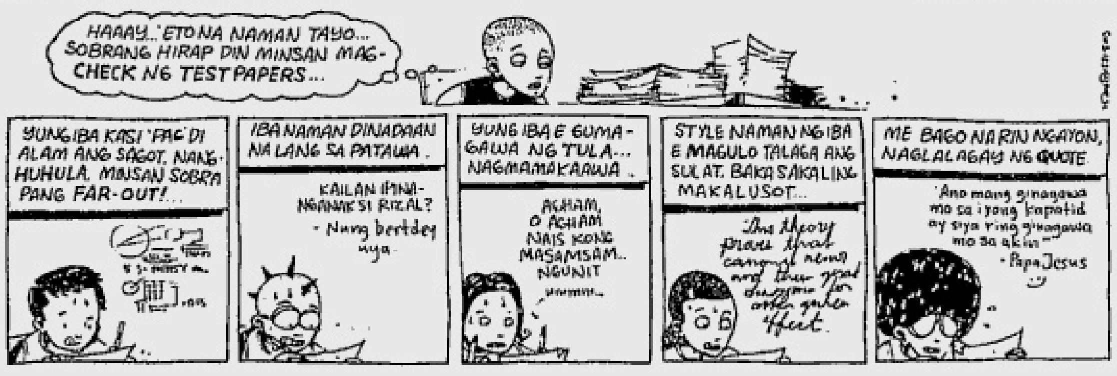
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


I CAN'T SLEEP. I'M TOO HOT!
I KNOW DEAR ...
...TRY TAKING OFF YOUR TANK TOP...
I STILL CAN'T SLEEP!..
WHY NOT?
'CAUSE YOU'RE TAKING OFF YOUR TANK TOP!
SHELTON

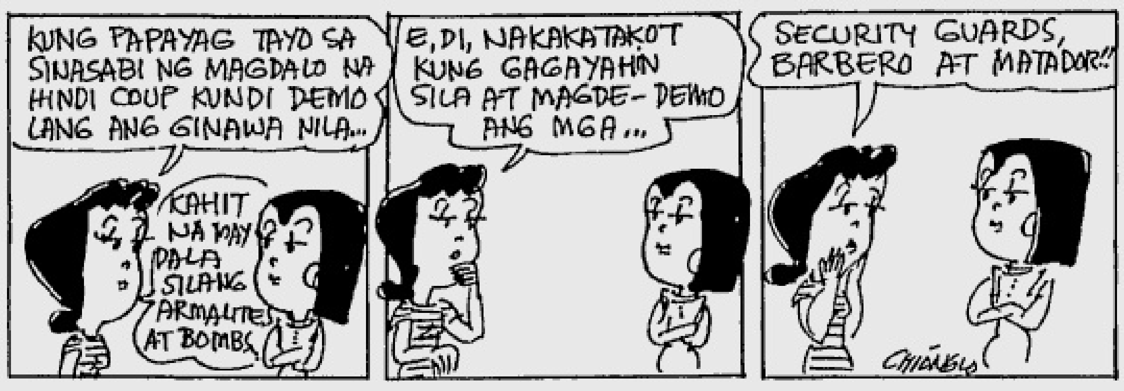
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PAGLAKI KO, MAGTATAYO AKONG MALAKING PABRIKA PARA YUMAMAN NG HUSTO..
BAKA NAMAN PURO POLUSYON ANG IBUGA NUN, AT IKAMATAY MO PA, KAHIT MAYAMAN KA.
WAG KA MAG-ALALA, KULOT. ISUSULAT NAMAN KITA SA "WILL" KO E.
www.mikrokosmos.tk
GAGAWIN MO TALAGA YON, BUNSOY?
OO! ILALAGAY KO LANG NAMAN. "HI KULOT!"
J. Tejido 8 03

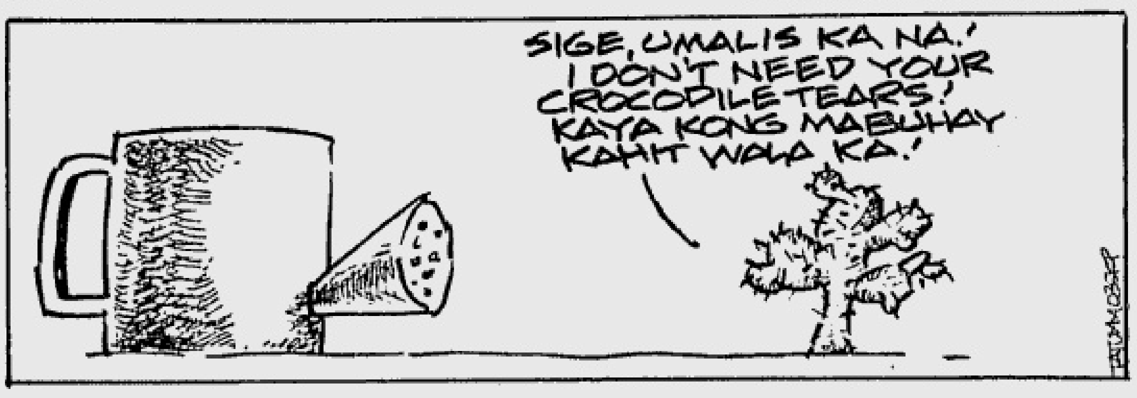
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


HAAAY..'ETO NA NAMAN TAYO... SOBRANG HIRAP DIN MINSAN MAG-CHECK NG TEST PAPERS...
YUNG IBA KASI 'PAG DI ALAM ANG SAGOT, NANGHUHULA. MINSAN SOBRA PANG FAR-OUT!..
IBA NAMAN DINADAAN NA LANG SA PATAWA.
KAILAN IPINANGANAK SI RIZAL?
- Nung bertdey nya.
YUNG IBA E GUMAGAWA NG TULA... NAGMAMAKAAWA.
AGHAM, O AGHAM NAIS KONG MASAMSAM.. NGUNIT ummm..
STYLE NAMAN NG IBA E MAGULO TALAGA ANG SULAT. BAKA SAKALING MAKALUSOT..
ME BAGO NA RIN NGAYON, NAGLALAGAY NG QUOTE.
"Ano mang ginagawa mo sa iyong kapatid ay siya ring ginagawa mo sa akin" - Papa Jesus

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


KUNG PAPAYAG TAYO SA SINASABI NG MAGDALO NA HINDI COUP KUNDI DEMO LANG ANG GINAWA NILA...
KAHIT NA MAY DALA SILANG ARMALITE AT BOMBS
E, DI, NAKAKATAKOT KUNG GAGAYAHIN SILA AT MAGDE-DEMO ANG MGA...
SECURITY GUARDS, BARBERO AT MATADOR!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING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Tours, Leisure & Chow

Alden Joshua Cedo, Graphics Design

cmadamba@inquirer.com.ph
897-8808 local 209 and 238

Back-to-back food festival at Dusit Hotel Nikko

AS PART of its September offering, Dusit Hotel Nikko presents two interesting Food Festivals.

From Sept. 4 to 14, Thailand's Southern Cuisine is highlighted in the second of a three-part series of the Flavours of Thailand Regional Food Fare at Benjarong Thai Restaurant.

Southern cuisine is best known for its really hot spices. The locals living in this humid climate region believe that the heat from the food they eat can prevent sickness or fevers.

On the menu are Phad Sa Tow Gung (mixed vegetables with pork and prawns), Gaeng Liang Gung (prawns and vegetables in turmeric hot soup), Kanom Jeen Namya Pat Tai (Southern Thai noodles with spicy fish soup), Gaeng Tai Pla (spicy red curry with pickled fish casing) and Khao Yum Pak Tai (steamed rice salad).

From Sept. 8 to 17, Hanoi's Best happens at Thien Duong Vietnamese Restaurant. In cooperation with Vietnam Airlines, the restaurant will fly in Guest Chef Kien Do from Hotel Nikko Hanoi, Vietnam.

Chef Kien, a veteran chef at 25, started his career at the age of 19. He started working for Saigon Sakura, a Japanese Restaurant and moved to "La Do" Vietnamese Restaurant in 1997. Chef Kien joined Hotel Nikko Hanoi in 1998 as a Senior Cook where he has worked on many regional and international promotions proudly promoting foods of Vietnam.

For queries, call 867-3333 extension 3351 for Benjarong Thai Restaurant and 3354 for Thien Duong Restaurant.

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Visions of gems and mythical birds at The Tivoli

IN LINE with its objective of supporting the Filipino artistic community, Mandarin Oriental, Manila mounts an art exhibit, "Visions of Gems and Mythical Birds", at The Tivoli from July 21 to Sept. 22 featuring the works of Virgillio "Pandy" Aviado.

The exhibit focuses on the mythical Sarimanok and the series of gems and stones.

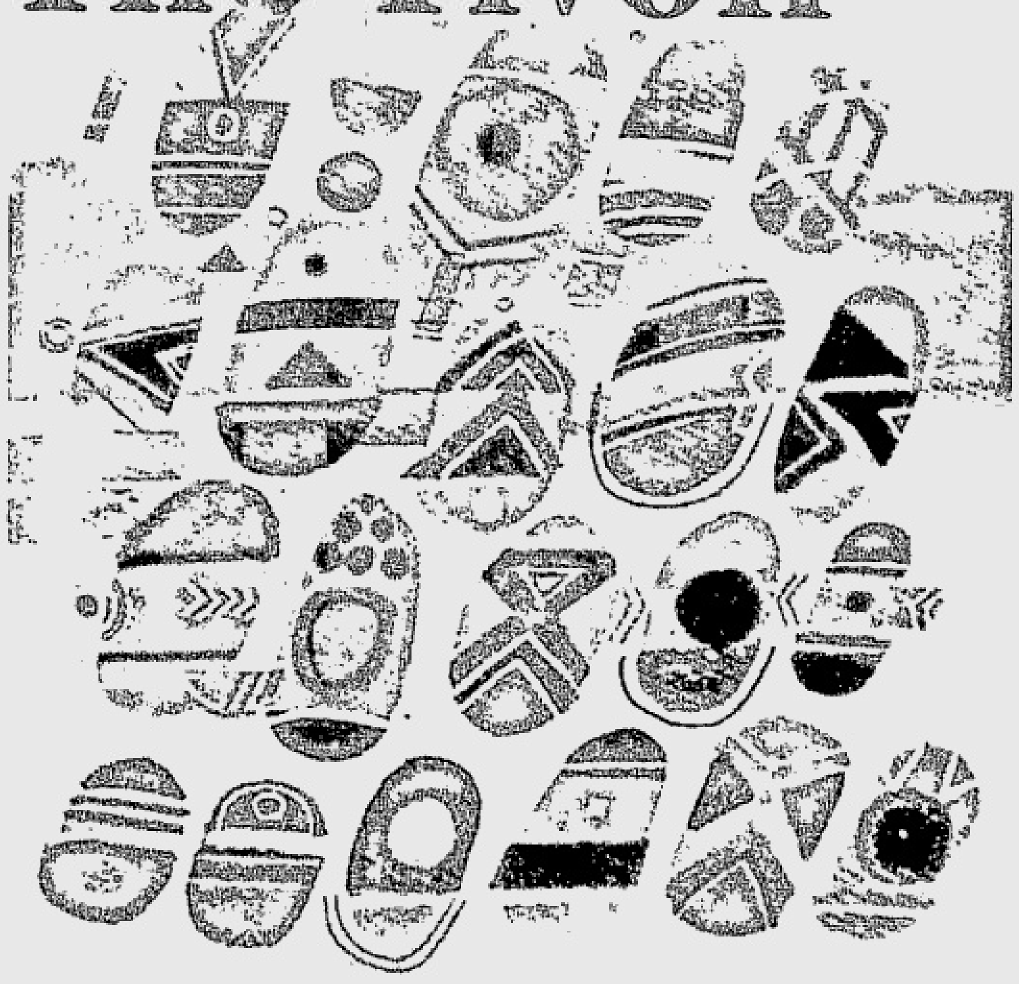
The Sarimanok, a colorful mythical bird cited either as a rooster or a peacock, takes on a vibrant and energetic quality in Aviado's hand-colored etchings and paintings. The birds with their undulating and colored plumes are rendered at rest in a regal pose beside their fish companions or in suspended motion, as though surfing on stylized waves and clouds.

In the Gems Series Aviado displays his mastery of the mixed media genre. The rich color and texture of the precious stones is further enhanced by his use of metallic pigments. His spontaneity allows him to experiment with materials like translucent cotton fabric, tarlatan or gauze which he employs in his collages. Cut in almost identical sizes and laid out in grid formats, these materials give the illusion of depth through its layers. The colors seen in his vibrant paintings appear subtly in the form of strips of hand-made paper laid underneath.

Aviado remarks: "I want my work to be a series of codes and messages that unravel in time." Indeed it takes a while before a viewer can decipher the cryptic combination of crowns, hand signs, hearts, fishes of different species and astrological symbols.

A noted visual artist, Aviado was among the local artists in the 1960s instrumental in promoting the art of fine printmaking. Apart from earning a fine arts degree at the Philippine Women's University, he trained at the Contemporary Art Gallery Workshop under Manuel Rodriguez Sr, one of the first proponents of contemporary printmaking in the country. He further pursued training in the graphic arts in Escuella Superior de Bellas Artes in Madrid, Spain and at the Ecole des Bellas Arts in Paris, France. He has held over 20 solo exhibitions and participated in several group shows held in Australia, Korea, Canada, Chile, Amsterdam, and Japan.

The exhibition runs until Sept. 22 at The Tivoli.



Exhilarating Taal Volcano adventure

TAAL Vista Hotel designs the "Trekking Adventure Package" for people to discover and explore the mystery of one of the Philippines' geographical wonders. Guests will surely enjoy the thrills of discovering the tranquility of Taal Lake as they savor its beauty in the comfort and privacy of Taal Vista Hotel.

The "Trekking Adventure Package" includes overnight accommodation in a De Luxe Room, American Breakfast, and an exhilarating volcano adventure trip. From Taal Vista Hotel, guests are transferred to Talisay to the jetty for a comfortable boat ride to the volcano island. The package includes a picnic and complimentary use of the picnic hut, roundtrip boat ride, an exciting horse ride up the volcano's lower crest, nature trekking and a guided tour of Taal Volcano's awe-inspiring crater lake. As an added privilege, if you bring your friends along and book one more room during the stay, enjoy other freebies such as the use of the Hobbie Cat, Kayaks, and Topper (Boat Sailing) and explore the waters of Taal Lake. This limited offer is priced at only P6,000 per couple and is valid until Dec. 31.

For inquiries and reservations on the "Trekking Adventure Package," call its Manila sales office at 830-2373 and 867-1159. Visit www.barcelo-asia.com.

Shown enjoying the adventure-filled trek to Taal Volcano's ridge are (from front to back): Anette Villamiel, Renee Balasbas, Jem Lansangan and Judy Ochoa-Laurel, rooms division manager, from Taal Vista Hotel, and Francis de Leon, marketing and communications officer of Barceló Hotels and Resorts.

This is for people to discover and explore the mystery of one of the Philippines geological wonders

French wine and distinctive dining at Bellevue Hotel

AN EXCLUSIVE wine tasting party hosted by Bestworld Beverage Brands was recently held at the posh 20/20 entertainment center of the Bellevue Hotel. After all, distinctive diners would want nothing less than the best gourmet food, a romantic view of the Manila Bay Sunset and an impeccable service to go along with fine French wines that will be featured for the special evening.

Showcased were various French wines such as the vigorous Alexis Lichine Cabernet Sauvignon 2001, the well-structured Bordeaux Rouge 2001 and the elegant Pasquier Desvignes Cotes Du Rhone Blanc 2001. The full-bodied Chateauneuf Du Pape 2001, the light Café De Paris and the well-balanced Cruse Brouilly 2001 were enjoyed as well, to the delight of wine lovers.

The Bellevue Hotel's general manager Cyndy Tan-Jarabata, director of sales Myra Miranda and marketing services manager Ryan Chan were more than able to entertain guests and show them hospitality, Bellevue-style.

SIMPLICIO Umali, Dennis Huang, Patrick Lee, Bellevue GM Cyndy Tan-Jarabata, Melito Salazar and Nestor Constancia

EARL Trezar Abella and Bellevue Marketing Services Manager Ryan Chan

JAMES Teh, Sathit Thamutok, Bellevue Director for Sales Myra Miranda and Sermpong Manasnayakorn

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'League' long and loud

From page A27

inventiveness that the rest of the movie lacks.

The horrifically cornball dialogue makes it clear that what "LXG" really is channeling is the spirit of Russell Mulcahy's flawed 1994 pulp update "The Shadow." Based on an Orson Welles radio play, that movie made the same mistakes by over-simplifying a pulp hero, in that case Alec Baldwin's masked man. Observant viewers may even confuse "LXG's" Fantom with John Lone's Khan. Both movies just fail to do justice to the potential of fictional heroes, an unfortunate misstep in a time when more comic books are coming to the screen.

By the time the silly plot twists have been revealed and the true villains unmasked (literally), "LXG" falls into the trap of very recent summer movies: It doesn't seem to know how to end. Though it tries mightily to keep itself propped up, there's just too much bombast and not enough edge to save this movie from becoming typical action fare. It's just long and loud, something that merely reinforces many viewer's notions that comic books are limited forms of entertainment and creativity.

Which is a shame, really. Read the original series and its sequel, now just about to conclude, from DC Comics' ABC imprint. The chasm between the source material and its movie spawn is unthinkably wide. Moore, the best writer in comic books, and O'Neill's original premise, that of gathering great fictional heroes in a group for a common cause, remains full of promise.

Even disappointed movie viewers will leave "LXG" pondering what combinations of disparate heroes they can come up with on their own. Just as a fanciful example: a new generation LXG composed of leader Nancy Drew, a grown-up but still wealthy Richie Rich, a muzzled Hannibal Lecter and an adult wizard named Harry Potter.

In the end, "LXG" takes a brilliant comic book idea and transforms it into a ho-hum movie, a product that's anything but extraordinary.

20th Century Fox's "The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen" is now showing in Metro Manila theaters.

ARANETA CENTER
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	KEKA
Ali 2	NOON AT NGAYON
Ali 3	ITALIAN JOB
Ali 4	LXG
Ali 5	FINDING NEMO
Ali 6	VIEW FROM THE TOP
Ali 7	ALEX AND EMMA

ARANETA COLISEUM

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AUG 28	UAAP GAMES : UP VS. DLSU
AUG 30	UAAP GAMES : FEU VS. UE
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ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY [illegible]
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	NENA INOCENTE
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	NENA INOCENTE
B	SNAKE LADY
C	
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CINEMA-3	BEHIND GREEN DOOR
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BAD BOYS 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	TOMB RAIDER 2
CINEMA-6	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-7	KEKA
CINEMA-8	BABASAGIN KRISTAL
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LXG
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ITALIAN JOB
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	FINDING NEMO
CINEMA-12	VIEW FROM THE TOP
CINEMA-14	ALEX & EMMA
CINEMA-15	NOON AT NGAYON
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
(LAS PIÑAS)	[illegible]
CINEMA-1	NOON AT NGAYON
CINEMA-2	IMPOSTOR
CINEMA-4	[illegible]
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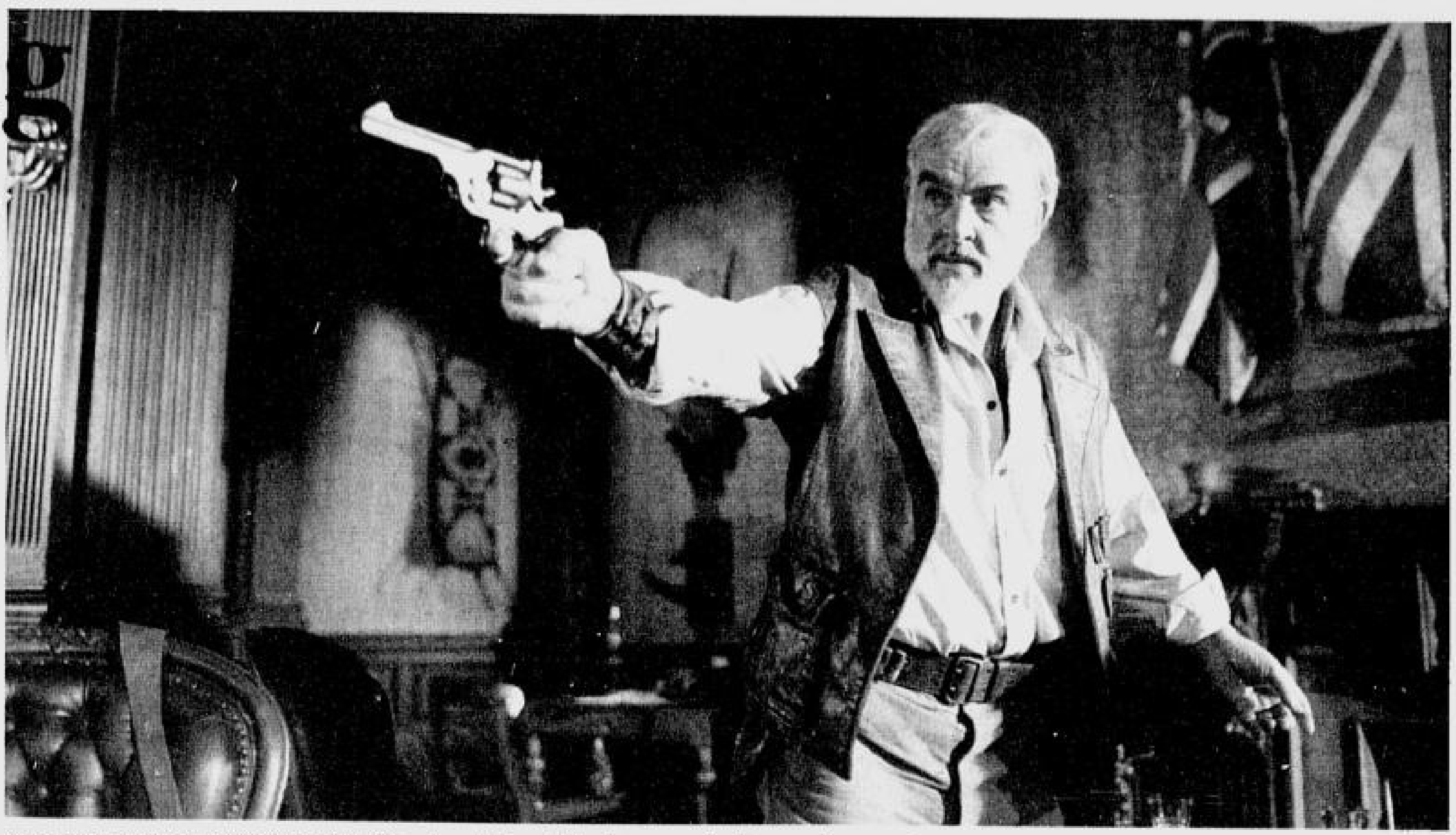
‘League’ long and loud

REVIEW

By Ruel S. De Vera



CONNERY AS QUATERMAIN. A brilliant comic-book idea becomes ho-hum action movie.

IT IS interesting to note how Sean Connery has morphed from an actor essaying leads in action movies to becoming the role himself.

From his ebony-haired James Bond days, Connery has aged into an action hero archetype by himself: the heavy-set, white-haired, bearded reluctant adventurer with a licorice-thick accent and gruff nobility. Thus Connery has been playing himself in movies such as “The Rock,” “Highlander” and “Entrapment.”

That’s a vital insight to take with you as you watch Connery’s most recent portrayal of himself in 20th Century Fox’s “The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen.” Based on a lush comic book series by Alan Moore and Kevin O’Neill, “League” has several Victorian heroes from literature battling unusual threats.

INVISIBLE MAN Skinner

But as the comic book series “League” was a dark, moody character and set piece with a resonant theme of the thin line between hero and monster, the movie “League,” known better by its zeitgeist buzz-name “LXG,” is a dumbed-down action flick, with “Blade” director Stephen Norrington turning the literary legends into action figures.

The main problem is with screenwriter James Dale Robinson’s heavy-handed treatment of “LXG,” which deviates too far from the comic book’s more complicated intentions. In Robinson’s plot, the League is just a top hat away from being just another bunch of costumed heroes banding together to save the world. In 1899, the world is set to tear itself apart due to the mysterious conspiracy led by the masked menace known only as “The Fantom.”

Impressive group

To resolve the situation, the head of the British intelligence, M. (“Moulin Rouge’s” Richard Roxburgh) gathers an impressive group of operatives: Allan Quatermain (Connery) from H. Rider Haggard’s “King Solomon’s Mines,” Captain Nemo (Naseeruddin Shah) from Jules Verne’s “20,000 Leagues Under The Sea,” Mina Harker (Peta Wilson from TV’s “Le Femme Nikita”) originally Mina Murray from Bram Stoker’s “Dracula,” Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde (Jason Flemyng) from Robert Louis Stevenson’s “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,” a variation on H.G. Wells’ “The Invisible Man” (Tony Curran) and enigmatic Dorian Gray (“Queen of the Damned’s” Stuart Townsend doing yet another immortal character) from Oscar Wilde’s “The Picture of Dorian Gray.” Agent Sawyer (Shane West), ostensibly the grown-up Tom Sawyer from Mark Twain’s book and an agent for the American Secret Service, tags along.

Instead of the lurid and involving apocalyptic plot from the “League” comic book’s first series, “LXG” focuses on a plan to sow chaos among the world’s governments by sinking the City of Venice. On board Nemo’s ship, The Nautilus, the League goes out to try and stop it from happening. Of course, there’s much more scheming at work here as the League’s members not only have to survive each other but also the work on a traitor from within.

But all that, well, plotting goes out the castle windows in order to accommodate the movie’s bumper crop of dizzying action scenes, separated by long, dozing periods of attempted character development. There’s no use comparing the movie’s strengths and weaknesses with those of the comic book (no contest there), but even by itself, “LXG” feels cumbersome and yet light-headed at the same time.

Connery carries the movie with his trademark, if a bit slower, heroics and banter. It’s his movie, without a doubt, and anyone who likes Connery movies will be happy to discover he can still carry a film. But his Quatermain, while full of virile presence, is also one without much of a subtext: He’s the leader, period, without the obvious weaknesses of the comic book’s enfeebled geriatric.

Similarly, the movie’s flat vision of Nemo, despite Indian star Shah’s best efforts, leaves the character looking like the latest iteration on Punjab from “Little Orphan Annie.”

The movie’s best performance is that by Flemyng. While his Jekyll/Hyde sticks more to popular notions about the character rather than the original version, Flemyng transcends the movie’s hackneyed approach to produce an effective duality that captures some of what the original comic book series contained. Flemyng does that despite the fact that his Hyde character looks laughably like a cross between The Grinch and He-Man. But at least, it’s not Ang Lee’s “The Hulk.”

Cornball dialogue

Though the movie was shot partly in picturesque Prague, you’ll hardly notice it because the movie seems draped in an eternally murky darkness, as if someone had spilled black poster color all over the negative. The effects are par for the course for what you would expect from an expensive movie like this.

Ironically, the best thing about the movie is its take on Nemo’s Nautilus. Slicing through the waters like a gigantic “sword of the sea,” the intricately decorated ship inspires the kind of awe and

LEAGUE/ A26

‘Amazing Race’ finale

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE BIG finale “The Amazing Race 4” will be telecast on the AXN action channel at 8 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 22. After many gruelling weeks that have taken the teams of contestants around the world, viewers will finally be able to find out which competing couple will be the first to reach the last destination, and win $1 million.

“The Amazing Race” has acquired a big following because it combines travel, adventure, competition, physical and mental agility, the ability to work together and personal drama as its prime attractions.

Competing couples are carefully chosen for variety and good representation of audience sectors, but the show is exciting because it can’t really program all or even most of the factors involved.

Thus, the human factor eventually emerges as the program’s strongest suit, because it encourages viewers to empathize with the teams of their choice, and to root for their favorites all the way to the finish line.

The unknowable and the unquantifiable are powerfully attractive to viewers. For instance, a heretofore cool couple will slowly lose their composure under pressure, and end up screaming at each other.

On the other hand, an initially unpromising team will learn quickly as the race proceeds, and become a hot contender towards the end of the whole competition.

Given the show’s strong suits, it’s likely that “The Amazing Race 5” will soon come to our TV screens, to take us around the world once more, but with a fresh batch of contestants viewers can empathize with.

Other new treats on AXN: “CSI: Miami” premiered earlier this month, and can be viewed every Wednesday at 9 p.m. The series is created by Jerry Bruckheimer, who incidentally is also the producer, not just of the popular “CSI: Crime Scene Investigation,” but also of “The Amazing Race”! Indeed, when it comes to television, Bruckheimer has many hot bases covered.

And AXN will present an eight-hour animé marathon on Aug. 30, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. This is the finale to the cable channel’s month-long “Salute to Animé!” special, which began last Aug. 7 with Ozamu Tezuka’s “Metropolis,” one of the most popular animé movies of all time.

P.S.: Last Monday evening, we caught the penultimate leg of the current edition of “The Amazing Race,” and our hearts went out to the last three pairs of contestants, who were given particularly difficult tests and challenges.

Especially stressful was the inclusion of some fake clues and red herrings that frustrated the contestants and had them scrambling to get back on course, and make up for lost time.

At the episode’s end, it was announced that it .was a “non-elimination leg,” so all three teams will be competing in the finals tomorrow. *Abangan.*

Cecile Licad in concert

THE ASSET Management Group of the Bank of the Philippine Islands is sponsoring acclaimed pianist Cecile Licad’s concert on Aug. 26 at Onstage, Greenbelt 1, Makati. Licad will be accompanied by the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra.

The world-class pianist is based in New York City, but is taking time out from her international engagements to do a national tour. She will also perform in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, Tuguegarao, Bacolod and Davao.

Miguel Vera: I wish Ai-Ai the best

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

MIGUEL Vera can’t keep his disgust bottled up inside anymore. He feels bad that when his ex-live-in partner Ai Ai de las Alas’ life story was shown in “Maalaala Mo Kaya,” he was depicted as an evil person.

“It was so exaggerated,” he said. “The least they could have done was to get my side of the story *para* balanced *naman*. Between Ai and me, I admit I have more faults, *pero ‘wag naman nilang palabasin na napakasama kong tao.*”

Although soap operas like “MMK” do need to embellish a story for cinematic purposes, they must stick to the facts, which is quite tricky. The prerogative that comes with artistic license must not be used to an extreme. Just tell it like it is. Don’t tell it the way you’d like it to be.

Their tumultuous love affair is an open book, but that story has ended. Miguel said that all is well between them now. He has no objections to Ai Ai’s romance with a woman director. “If that’s what makes her happy, then so be it,” he said. “*May pinagsamahan kami*, so I wish her nothing but the best.”

To lighten the mood, I teased him: “Don’t you have plans to woo her back?”

He laughed. “Time’s up! If we got back together again, *baka magka*-sequel *pa ‘yung* life story *niya at palabasin na naman akong kontrabida*. Once is enough!”

Hopefully, they will both have the last laugh even as their dramatic past continues to haunt them.

Pops at the Shang

I REMEMBER when I told Pops Fernandez some years back that it would be a good idea if she would have small, intimate shows in a small lounge for a change. She had her apprehensions back then. “I feel quite uncomfortable singing in an up-close setting,” she said. “I’m more used to having major concerts in huge places.”

But gone are those inhibitions now, which only goes to show that Pipay has truly come to terms with herself. Pops is pleased to return to the concert stage for a one-night-only show at the Makati Shangri-La Manila this month. She will sing classic tunes, Broadway hits and some of the most popular songs from the movies, with musical direction by Homer Flores.

“Pops Live! at the Shang,” a production of Maxi-Media International, happens on Saturday, Aug. 30, at the Rizal Ballroom of the Makati Shangri-La Manila. Tickets at P1,100 and P1,350 (plus 3 percent ticketron charge, inclusive of one standard drink) are available at all Ticketworld outlets in major National Bookstore branches and Robinsons malls, Tower Records Makati and Alabang, Onstage Ticketron and Maxi-Media ticketing office, 551-8999 and 551-7777.

Carol Banawa’s dad…

From page A28

the US.

She refused to name her boyfriend. “He’s with the US military,” she explained. “But he’s Filipino. I met him even before he joined the service. He also sings.

“We plan to get married but not soon. We’d like to get married when we’re in the same country and when my father can already walk me to the altar.

“Not so soon, maybe later,” she added. “*Bahala na.* I have also received some offers abroad. If anything comes out of the offers na iyon, *eh di maganda. Magkakaroon ako ng* international career. For now, my priority is my dad’s rehabilitation. Love and career can wait.”

In the liner notes of her Star Records CD album, Carol has this message for her “Mahal”: “I wrote a song (‘Ikaw Lamang’) here for you. I just want to thank you for always understanding me and my whole family. Thank you for not just being the person that I love but also for being my best friend. I love you.”

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		11.30 am	2.00 pm	4.30 pm	7.00 pm	9.30 pm
Aug 21 Thursday	GREENBELT 1 CINEMA 1	UZAK Turkey	ANGEL ON THE RIGHT Tajikistan	THE ISLANDERS (Documentary) Philippines	DAYS OF BEING WILD Hong Kong	WELCOME TO DESTINATION SHANGHAI
	GREENBELT 1 CINEMA 2	CITY SHARKS Singapore	THE SON (Le Fils) Belgium	HUBAD SA ILALIM NG BUWAN Philippines	YEAR OF THE DEVIL (Rok Dabla) Czech Republic	24 HOUR PARTY PEOPLE United Kingdom
Aug 22 Friday	GREENBELT 1 CINEMA 1	PONIENTE Spain	RILES (Documentary) Philippines	THE BIG DURIAN Malaysia	ROOM TO LET Malaysia	DAYS OF BEING WILD Hong Kong
	GREENBELT 1 CINEMA 2	WAITING FOR HAPPINESS Mauritania	TUHOG Philippines	BLESSING BELL Japan	TALE OF A NAUGHTY GIRL India	BRIEF CROSSING France
Aug 23 Saturday	GREENBELT 1 CINEMA 1	UZAK Turkey	LETTER TO AN ANGEL Indonesia	PUBLIC TOILET Hong Kong	JELANGKUNG 1 Indonesia	TUSUK JELANGKUNG Indonesia
	GREENBELT 1 CINEMA 2	THE MISSING GUN China	DOLLS Japan	THE BUTTONERS Czech Republic	YEAR OF THE DEVIL (Rok Dabla) Czech Republic	BRIEF CROSSING France
Aug 24 Sunday	GREENBELT 1 CINEMA 1	MAN WITHOUT A PAST Finland	BENDERA Indonesia	DOLLS Japan	LAN YU Hong Kong	DOGVILLE Denmark
	GREENBELT 1 CINEMA 2		CITY OF GOD Brazil	SWIMMING POOL France	BRIEF CROSSING France	EROTIC TALES Germany

Changes in the screening schedule are a result of film festival print traffic. Additional screenings to be announced later.

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Louie C. Camino

Claudine checks out of hospital

By Marinel R. Cruz

BARRETTO FILE PHOTO

YOUNG actress Claudine Barretto yesterday was released from the hospital after a tonsillectomy and three days of treatment for fever and throat infection, according to her manager.

Barretto was brought to the Medical City Hospital in Mandaluyong City on Sunday afternoon after complaining of fever and difficulty in swallowing, said her manager Deo Endrinal.

She was discharged at noon yesterday, he added.

He said doctors advised Barretto rest. She would resume work tomorrow, Friday, he said.

Last Sunday, Barretto was seen crying at the Sunday noontime variety show "ASAP Mania" due to difficulty in swallowing, said Endrinal.

Despite her condition, the young star had to do a one-hour pictorial before she could be taken to the hospital.

"She is home and is doing fine now," Endrinal said.

He said that because of Barretto's illness, she was not able to tape last week for ABS-CBN's youth series, "Buttercup," which revolves around the chaotic love life of her character, Meg.

The news conference for "Buttercup: Second Season," which had been scheduled for today, had to be postponed to give Barretto more time to rest, Endrinal said.

Her Aug. 24 trip to Milan, Italy, where they would film the movie "Milan," directed by Olivia Lamasan, for the Metro Manila Film Festival in December, will also be moved.

Carol Banawa's dad 'deteriorating'

Docs say he's hopeless, but she refuses to give up

By Julie Fe Navarro and Jocelyn Valle
Contributors

DADDY'S GIRL. Love and career can wait while she takes care of her father, says Banawa, adding she's not getting married soon.

FILE PHOTO

SINGER actress Carol Banawa is leaving for the United States on Aug. 25 to see to the rehabilitative therapy of her father, who was paralyzed following a 1999 poisoning in the family car.

Carol said she plans to stay in the US for good, but she won't marry her non-show biz boyfriend yet.

Carol revealed her plans during the launch last week of her new album, "Follow Your Heart."

In 1999, Carol's brother Alex died while their father was paralyzed from the waist down due to severe damage to his brain and nerves, apparently as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning while they were in the car in the parking area of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

The singer turned misty-eyed as she recalled that four years ago, her dad and her brother became victims of carbon monoxide poisoning as they apparently waited for her in their parked car at the mall. Father and son slept with the car air-conditioning on. Hours later, Carol's brother was discovered dead while her father was gasping for breath.

"My father's condition has been deteriorating," said Carol, a contract star of ABS-CBN who was in the recent telenovela "Bituin" with Nora Aunor . "His doctors are telling us *na wala nang pag-asa.* But he can recognize my face, and his grip is strong. So we have decided to bring him to the States.

"I have a friend there who had the same medical case as my father, although my friend didn't suffer from carbon monoxide poisoning," she said. "He fell while playing basketball and hit his head. Now he can already talk because of the therapy that he's been getting there."

The singer shook her head when asked if she was going to the US to marry her boyfriend. "I'm leaving with my family on August 25 for my dad's rehabiliative therapy," she said. "*Sabi ng doktor dito, wala na raw pag-asa. Anong gagawin namin? Pababayaan na lamang ba namin na ganoon siya?*"

She said she met a doctor in California during one of her singing engagements. "He has a clinic in Beverly Hills and we're bringing my dad to him. We'd like to try. I'm not saying that he'd be cured if we brought him to the US. The point is, we're doing everything."

Carol clarified that she was not shopping at SM Megamall when the poisoning accident happened four years ago. She said she was in school at the University of Asia and the Pacific, where she was then taking up Information Technology, when her father and her brother decided to stop by Megamall to eat.

She recalled that her father and brother had had a long day negotiating with some people over a car accident. They earlier called her mother at home to tell her where they were. That was why Carol knew they were in the mall, she explained.

She said that when her father and brother did not fetch her from school, just a few blocks away from Megamall, she asked her friends from ABS-CBN to help her locate her father and brother.

"My friends had planned to watch a movie but they were kind enough to help me," she said. "I knew the car's plate number so we were able to find it in the third level of the Megamall car park. My brother had been dead for four hours."

The drama show "Maalaala Mo Kaya" last April aired an episode based on that experience. Kaye Abad played Carol.

Carol dropped out of college after the tragedy and concentrated on her show biz career. She shone as Jewel, the lead in Trumpets' musical rendering of "The Little Mermaid" in 2000 and 2001. She also played the long-suffering daughter of Nora Aunor in "Bituin" that wrapped up early this year.

She's been in show business for nine years.

"There are things that have to be done," she stressed in Filipino. "But if I'll be needed here, I'm open to coming back and working here again."

Carol will be staying with an older sister in Los Angeles, California. She plans to continue the child-care center studies that she has started via a correspondence school and to audition for possible performing jobs while in

CAROL/ A27

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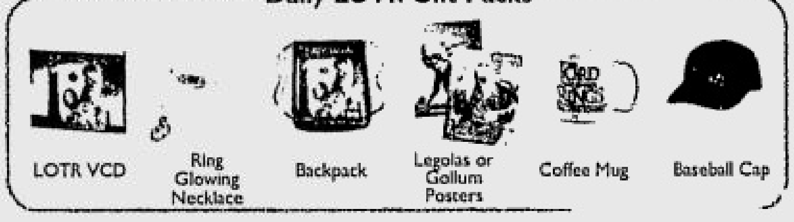

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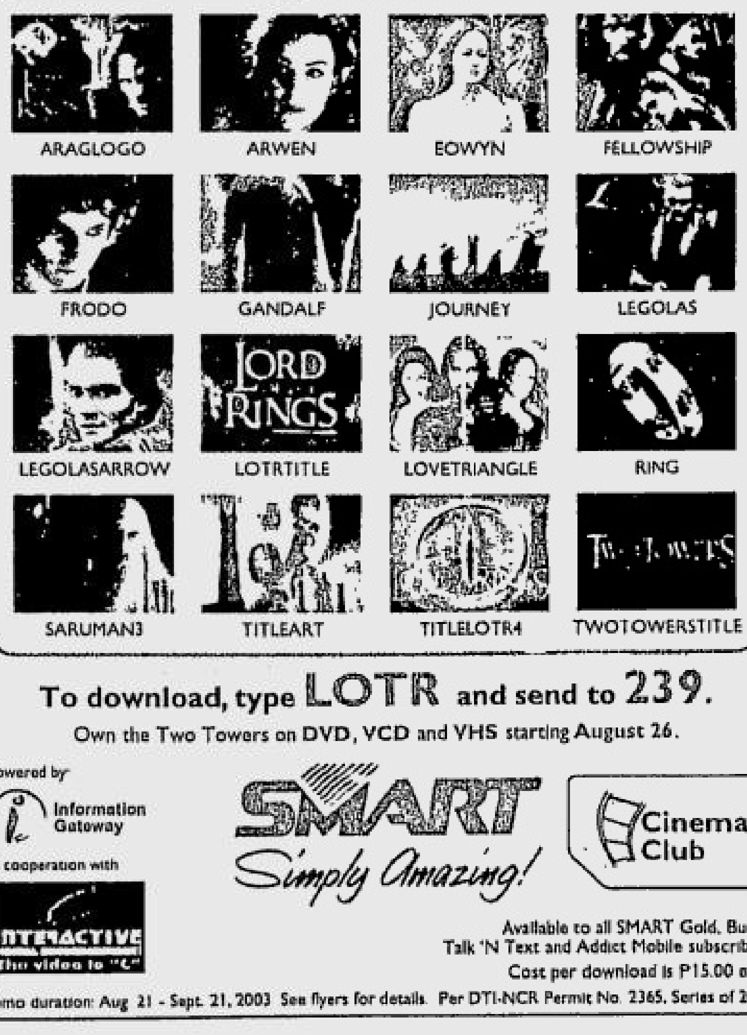

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Politicking alarms industry execs

By Michelle V. Remo and Doris C. Dumlao

THE BUSINESS community has expressed concern that this early, the country is suffering from too much politicking in anticipation of the May 2004 elections. And as usual, businessmen are complaining that the volatile political scenario is badly affecting business.

CONCEPCION

ORTIZ-LUIS

Industrialist and consumer advocate Raul Concepcion said he regretted that the country's legislators were already "gearing toward the 2004 elections" instead of focusing on the legislative agenda. "Since Congress resumed session three weeks ago, the legislators have not dealt properly on things that matter but on politicking," he said in a telephone interview.

Concepcion was referring to the ongoing hearings in Congress on the case of the July 27 mutineers and the recent privileged speech of Sen. Panfilo Lacson against First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

Concepcion said Congress should instead hold closed-door hearings on the mutiny to veer media attention away from too much politicking of legislators. He said politicking in Congress was giving the country a hard time to recuperate from the recent events that dampened the country's economic climate.

Sergio Ortiz-Luis, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said politicians should be cautious in uttering public statements because the current scenario was already hurting business. "We don't know whether the political bickering is happening because election is near, but we really suggest that both parties be discriminate in their actions," he said. Ortiz-Luis said unsubstantiated claims should be withheld because too much prattle was hurting the country's image abroad.

Ortiz-Luis, who is also head of the Philippine Exporters Confederation, also appealed to media to carefully discern the news items that they would release to the public in order not to further erode investor sentiment in the country.

Stocks market dealers are also concerned that political intrigues might divert the government's attention away from more pressing economic concerns.

"It seems like the problem with politics is a never-ending story. The bottom line is that it is hampering or slowing down the flow of investments," said Astro del Castillo, a director of the Association of Securities Analysts of the Philippines.

Del Castillo said the recent bombshell dropped by Sen. Panfilo Lacson had signaled the start of the race toward the presidential elections in May 2004.

"Our worry is that the administration might be too focused on fending off political intrigues rather than concentrating on the economic and social needs of the country," he said.

Eagle Equities president Joseph Roxas said it was no surprise that mudslinging had started as the May elections draw near.

"She (President Macapagal) didn't announce that she's not going to run so the assumption is that she's now going to run so people are throwing stones at her. It's election season," Roxas said.

Meantime, the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (Finex) said in a statement that it believed the recent decision of the Court of Appeals to suspend Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura and four other BSP officials was another unwelcome episode for the business community "as it only aggravated the damage that the latest military uprising caused the country's already fragile economy."

Peso hits 31-month low, closes at 55.19 to $1

By Clarissa S. Batino

POLITICAL mudslinging is dragging the peso down to new depths as it closed at a record low of 55.19 to a dollar yesterday from 55.12 on Tuesday in a market continually spooked by the repercussions of pre-election posturings.

This was the peso's weakest level in 31 months or since January 2001 when it hit 55.75 to $1 in intra-day trading following the impeachment of then president Joseph Estrada for corruption. A military-backed popular revolt ended his rule on the same day.

The local currency has remained the region's worst performer since the start of the year after shedding 2.9 percent of its value.

Traders said the peso should start to recover in the coming days as they considered the currency's level as "already expensive." Most market players spotted the central bank unloading $5 million when the peso hit a low of 55.20 to $1.

Turnover yesterday was only $82.5 million, down from $103.2 million on Tuesday.

With the continued depreciation of the peso, market players are suspecting that the central bank might use its monetary tools like an adjustment in the overnight tiering scheme to tighten the liquidity in the system.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. agreed that political developments have added pressure to a market trying to address the increasing dollar demand of importers.

"Sound macroeconomic fundamentals are being swamped by noise caused by non-economic factors."

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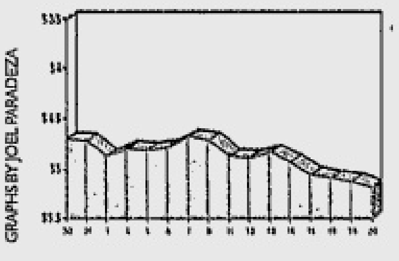

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 55.19 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Aug. 20, 2003

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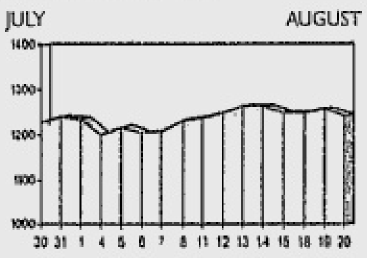
As of 5 p.m., Aug. 20, 2003

GOLD: $362.50-363.00

per ounce Hong Kong, Aug. 20, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Stocks drop on political worries



(See stock market report on Page B2)

STOCKS shed more than one percent yesterday after the peso fell to a 31-month low as political concerns soured investor confidence.

The Philippine main index closed 14.1 points, or 1.12 percent lower, at 1,242.86. The market has managed to gain 22.04 percent far this year.

"The story really is the peso. The strengthening of other currencies only highlighted the peso's continuing weakness," said AB Capital economic analyst Jose Vistan.

"Players are watching the central bank on how it would deal with the peso but the court order suspending Governor Rafael Buenaventura added to the problems."

ForecastWeb said in a report political issues worsened the peso, which has been under pressure after a recent court order suspending Buenaventura for a year over the closure of a commercial bank.

On the political front, opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson has accused the husband of President Macapagal-Arroyo of corruption and involvement in money laundering activities.

"The market has barely recovered from the mutiny and more bad news are coming our way," Vistan said.

Value turnover reached P470.5 million, higher from Tuesday's P316.6 million.

In the broader market, losers beat gainers 43 to 13, with 43 stocks unchanged.

Vistan said he expected the market to remain bearish.in the near term with players cautious of political developments.

"I guess the market will continue to move sideways with a downward bias. The market is likely to test the next support at 1,210," he said.

Globe Telecom Inc., which cornered 32 percent of total trade yesterday, shed P20 or 3.08 percent at P630. *Reuters*

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Savings from renegotiated deals with Meralco IPPs seen rising

By Ronnel W. Domingo

UTILITY giant Manila Electric Co. is negotiating with independent power producers on possible savings for consumers of about P3.27 per kilowatt-hour in additional to a previously announced 15-centavo initial benefit from the renegotiation of their contracts.

Margarito B. Teves, chair of Meralco's independent board review committee, said in a radio interview the expected savings resulting from the renegotiation could total to about P3.50 per kWh.

"Pending issues involve penalty rates, on which Meralco is asking Quezon Power Philippines Ltd. and First Gas Power Corp. to (revise)," Teves said.

TEVES

The official explained that negotiations have produced an initial benefit to consumers of P10 billion or 15 centavos per kWh.

"(The initial savings is possible) as the IPPs have agreed to shoulder the local business taxes," Teves said.

He added that the initial agreements still needed approval of the IPPs' boards of directors and their lenders, as well as of regulators.

Teves, a member of the Meralco board and also chief executive of the Land Bank of the Philippines, is heading the three-member committee that is in talks with First Gas Power Corp. and Quezon Power.

First Gas owns the 1,000-megawatt Sta. Rita and the 500-MW San Lorenzo gas-fired plants in Batangas. Quezon Power owns and runs the 470-MW Mauban coal-fired plant in Quezon province.

Meralco started buying part of its supply from the independent generators since they went commercial in 2001 and 2002.

The distributor's power sales contracts with Quezon Power and First Gas were good until 2006 and 2007, respectively.

In a statement issued last week, Teves said total concessions seen to be included in the renegotiated deals could be at least P44 billion over the duration of the contracts.

He said previous discussions have reset the penalty rate to 98 centavos per kWh from the originally contracted 10 centavos per kWh.

The official explained that Meralco had asked that the penalty rate be pegged to the fixed operating and maintenance costs plus the capacity fee.

SPI Tech, AIG unit OK security for $10-M notes

By Doris C. Dumlao

INFORMATION technology outsourcer SPI Technologies Inc. has agreed to secure $10 million in convertible notes issued to the American Insurance Group (AIG) with shares of SPI subsidiary eTelecare International Inc. to be placed under escrow.

The allocation of shares, which was recently approved by SPI and AIG, gives the latter an assurance that it would get its due share in view of an ongoing bid by a unit of UK-based insurance giant Prudential Plc. to take over SPI, according to a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

SPI's controlling shareholders recently signed a non-binding agreement with Prudential unit PPM Ventures Ltd. (PPMV) to sell a 66.7-percent stake for $84 million, which excludes SPI's eTelecare call center business. PPMV will also undertake a tender offer to the minority stockholders.

AIG, through AIG Asian Opportunity Fund LP and Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co., has agreed to allow the PPVM bid provided that certain shares would be earmarked for its benefit, given that the convertible notes were not due for redemption by SPI until 2006.

Once the PPVM deal has been consummated, SPI would become a privately held company but the divesting shareholders, through a property dividend, would still control call center unit eTelecare, which by then would have been spun off.

Easycall to spin off Internet businesses, sell idle assets

EASYCALL Communications Philippines Inc. is set to further rationalize its operations through the spin-off of its Internet and call-center businesses and the sale of idle assets.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Easycall spokesperson Edgardo Abalos said the company's Internet and call-center businesses would be transferred to a wholly owned subsidiary. These assets, in turn, would form part of the capital contribution of Easycall.

Abalos said the transfer was recently approved by the company's board and be submitted for ratification by stockholders on Sept. 17.

Analysts said the spin-off of its operating business could mean that Easycall was being groomed as a backdoor listing vehicle for another business.

Meanwhile, the board likewise approved the sale of Easycall's non-core property assets such as condominium units at the Galleria, a condominium unit in the State building as well as various pieces of property located in Tagaytay City, General Trias in Cavite and Quezon City.

Easycall started commercial operations in May 1989, pioneering in the alphanumeric paging services. While it became a leader in the industry in the 1990s, the business was eventually made obsolete by the boom in SMS or texting through the mobile phone. The company then went into contact center outsourcing.

Doris C. Dumlao

Tanduay: 'Ginebra' a generic term

CLAIMING that "ginebra" is a Spanish generic term for "gin," Tanduay Distillers Inc. yesterday said it was unfazed by the complaint lodged against it by Ginebra San Miguel, adding that it would continue producing and selling Ginebra Kapitan and other similar products.

"Being a generic term, the word 'ginebra' cannot be a proper subject of appropriation as a mark. No amount of widespread use of the mark 'ginebra' by Ginebra San Miguel will give it any proprietary rights over the term," Tanduay said in a statement.

The company added that the trademark registration certificates of Ginebra San Miguel Inc. showed that the corporation disclaimed rights to the word "Ginebra" when used apart from the entirety of their trademarks. "This shows that Ginebra San Miguel is well aware that the generic term 'Ginebra' cannot be appropriated," Tanduay added.

By using a generic term, Tanduay said it was not committing intellectual property violations in its use of the marks "Ginebra Kapitan,' 'Ginebra Agila,' 'Ginebra Heneral' and 'Ginebra Torrero.' No one can claim exclusive ownership of the term 'ginebra' in the same manner that no one can claim ownership of the generic term 'rhum.' Tanduay is not complaining that Ginebra is producing Añejo Rhum. Similarly, we shall not cease using the term 'ginebra' for our gin products, nor will we withdraw our trademark applications for the same," the company stressed.

Where does the economy go from here?

By Johnny Noe E. Ravalo
Inq7.net

COMMENTARY

THERE is no longer any point in itemizing the possible economic costs of the rebellion. I also do not see any reason for debating how long the economy will feel the effects caused by the mutiny.

The real question now is where the economy goes from here.

The mutiny has put the country in a negative light. But the other reason which is less talked about is that a lot of Filipinos are now vocal in expressing that they have gotten tired of waiting for results that will benefit them directly.

This impatience seems to be confirmed by a recent Social Weather Stations survey which shows some 45 percent of respondents feel that their own condition has gotten worse over the last year with another 41 percent reporting no change. What makes these percentages really significant is that the country is actually posting strong growth rates.

This contradiction between the SWS survey results and what is reported as country growth is a very important point. It is in fact at the heart of our problems.

In practice, growth is used as the summary indicator of the complex relationships that transpire in the economy. But if growth is the preferred summary, then no Filipino should even be considering migrating, for example, to the United States. Even when you compare our gross domestic product growth with Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia, our growth still fares better than these countries post-1997. Yet we know that a good number of Filipinos are working in the United States and in the region in search of better lives for their families. Past surveys have in fact shown the high percentage of Filipinos who would want to migrate given the opportunity.

This simple example shows that growth by itself isn't enough. Part of this is the complaint that Philippine-style growth does not "trickle down" to the less fortunate. This leaves the impression that the growth for the "haves" is quite different from the growth for the "have-nots." We can see shades of social inequity in this but it is really premised on otherwise dull mathematics. It is always true that the growth of the country as a whole must be an average of the respective growth of the various sectors.

So when we are told that growth has been 5 percent, there should not be any suggestion that every Filipino is experiencing 5-percent growth. The reality is that some sectors are doing better than a 5-percent improvement while others might be languishing. There is no inconsistency between these two polar conditions. Neither is there any pronouncement of equity.

Why is this issue relevant to where we go from here? Because it points to the gap between the "haves" and "have-nots." It is not so much that there is unevenness in growth. Rather it is the fact that some sectors are better positioned for growth while others seem predisposed not to have much of it. It is this difference that is really the structural premise of our economic problems.

This is not a recent development but it has been there for decades. But the bigger issue is that more growth by itself is not going to improve the gap. This is not what we normally hear. In fact all we hear is higher growth targets and plans to achieve higher growth.

The gap can only narrow if the "have-nots" grow significantly faster than the "haves." Higher growth by itself only talks about generating more (quantity) cash flows in the economy but makes no claim on the distribution (quality) of these flows.

Of course we would want higher growth to improve latent inequities but the fact that "good quality" growth at high levels is uncommon is precisely what makes this combination the ideal-but-difficult norm.

The Philippines' problems are really not operational in nature but much more structural in character. This is true regardless of whether we are talking about growth, agriculture, education, employment, finance, the fiscal deficit or trade.

With a diverse public already impatient for results they can see, the pressure is to deliver immediate impact. This can lure us into the trap of popular policies that could provide short-term remedies. These short-term remedies are nothing more than operational retooling. Certainly, we cannot honestly expect them to provide lasting solutions. When you have a persistent headache caused by improper eyewear, over-the-counter relievers can only alleviate the pain but do not really address the underlying problem.

So where do we go from here? It clearly is going to be a thankless job for the person at the helm. There is considerable congestion from both competing ideas and competing interests. Add these to the heightened impatience of the public, what you get can very well be—as indeed it has been—the recipe for chaos, no matter how unreasonable, ill-advised and sporadic.

No one will disagree that there is enormous responsibility in taking the helm. As such we should ask those who offer to serve as our leaders to also offer concrete plans for taking us to the next step forward. We should insist that we no longer hear "reduce poverty," "expand employment" and "increase incomes." What we want to hear is their list of what needs to be done, how to do them and when they can act.

Whether we like it or not though, the events of late July have brought us back to the proverbial fork on the road. It is a bit of an ironic advantage that we have seen that fork before and that our present circumstances are not entirely new.

Where we go from here then is all about keeping our past in perspective and making the tough choices for our own future. After all, it is this future which is the ultimate reason for asking where do we go from here. Going back to that fork—by any means—should not be an option.

(The author is an internationally acclaimed economist who retired from the Bankers Association of the Philippines as its chief economist in February 2002. He now helps the Economic Affairs and Oversight committees in Congress on some economic issues.)

INTEREST RATES

August 20, 2003- MART1 Rates Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 20-Aug-03	MART1 19-Aug-03
1 Month	5.8625	5.8232
3 Months	5.8714	5.8125
6 Months	6.3	6.3661
1 Year	8.0518	8.0125
2 Years	9.5376	9.5317
3 Years	10.1179	10.1183
4 Years	10.4786	10.4567
5 Years	10.7286	10.7083
7 Years	11.4446	11.4367
10 Years	11.8571	11.8643
20 Years	12.125	12.1417
25 Years	12.4554	12.4683

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Tuesday, August 20, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco De Oro Univ. Bank	18	18	18	18	62,600
Bank Of The Phil. Islands	45.5	45.5	45	45.5?	46,500
China Banking Corp.	650	660	650	660?	3,880
Citystate Savings Bank	15.25	15.25	15.25	15.25	2,000
Equitable Pci Bank Inc.	34	34.5	34	34.5	2,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31	31.5	31	31?	233,400
Philippine National Bank	26	26	26	26	31,400
Phil. Savings Bank	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	2,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	2,700
Security Bank Corp.	19	19	19	19	209,000
Union Bank Of The Phil.	25 5	25 5	25.5	25.5?	107,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.36	1.42	1.36	1.42?	2,297,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	120	185	120	185?	210
Manulife Financial Corp.	1630	1650	1630	1650?	2,490
Pci Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.34	1.38	1.32	1.32?	135,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1185	1195	1185	1195?	1,560
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
Abs-Cbn Broadcasting Corp.	24.25	24 25	23.5	24?	29,500
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	0.62	0.62	0.62	.62?	120,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	645	645	625	630?	239,390
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	.0525?	1,800,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0525	0.0525	0.049	.05?	23,900,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.57	0.58	0.57	.58?	240,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.2	0.2	0.195	0.195	80,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	525	535	525	535	113,520
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	12.5	12.75	12.25	12.5	231,800
Manila Electric Co. B	18.5	18.75	18.5	18.75?	1,624,500
Petron Corp.	2.02	2 02	1.98	1.98?	4,485,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0 93	0.93	0 93	0.93	200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42?	3,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.1	4,108,000
Negros Navigation Co.Inc.	0.43	00 .	43 .	43 .43	? 50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0 38	0 .3	8 3	8 .38?	520,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	20,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.95	2 95	2.95	2.95	12,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30	31	30	31	10,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17.25	17.25	17	17?	128,900
Rfm Corp.	0.72	0.73	0.72	0.73	140,000
San Miguel Corp. A	53.5	54	53.5	54?	66,300
San Miguel Corp. B	63	63	63	63	93,000
Vitarich Corp.	0 26	0 26	0.26	0.26	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.42	0.43	0.42	.43?	300,000
Ayala Corp.	4.6	4.65	4.55	4.55?	4,338,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	.17?	200,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.6	2.65	2.6	2.65?	158,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.036	0.037	0.036	0.036	2,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	100,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.009	0.0095	0.009	0.009	142,000,000
Atn Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.7	35,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	2,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.6	0 .6	3 .5	9 .6?	19,640,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.13	0 .1	3 .1	3 .13	200,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.18	0 .19	5 .1	8 .18?	1,120,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.032	0 .03	2 .03	2 .032?	100,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	17.5	17.5	17.25	17.25	177,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.12	00 .	13 .	12 .12	? 530,000
Ionics Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.38	1.38?	238,000
J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78?	15,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.013	0 .01	3 .01	3 .013?	5,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.78	0 .7	9 .7	7 .78	510,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.26	.26?	3,390,000
Music Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.37	.37?	570,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.27	0.24	.26?	9,120,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.12	.125?	1,600,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	.98?	50,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	200,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.3	0 3	0.3	3?	1,000,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.1	1.1	1	1.06?	825,000
Spi Technologies Inc.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5?	41,500
Hotel, Recreation & Other	ServiCES				
Belle Corp.	0.53	0 .5	5 .5	3 .54?	3,330,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc	0.3	0	3 .2	5 .25?	70,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0 .	3	3 .3	340,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
Abs-Cbn Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	28,300
Pldt (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	400
Pldt (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,800
Pldt (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,800
Pldt (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
Pldt (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,600
Pldt (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10 5	10.5	10.5	1,600
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	5.2	5 2	5.2	5.2	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.4?	14,912,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.33	00 .	33 .	33 .33	60,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.19	50 .1	95 .1	95 .195	? 600,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.22	50 .2	25 .	22 .225	3,050,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.02	1.02	0.99	1	6,450,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc	1	1	1	1	10,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.19	50 .1	95 .	19 .19	? 2,350,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.21	50 .2	15 .2	15 .215	? 220,000
SM Development Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16?	42,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.8	5 8	5.7	5.7?	1,610,000
MINING					
Manila Mining Corp. A	0	42 00	42 .00	42 .0042	? 41,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0	42 .00	44 .00	42 .0044	? 13,000,000
Omico Corp.	0	34 .00	34 .00	34 .0034	7,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.28	00	28 .	28 .28	200,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.014	0.013	.014?	1,200,000
Interport Res.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	.0036?	5,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	25,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.23	0.23	0.21	.21?	80,000
South China Resources Inc	0.31	0.31	0.31	.31?	40,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.165	0.165	0.165	.165?	80,000

DISCLOSURES

BANCO de Oro Universal Bank clarified that preparation for its $100 million senior unsecured notes is still ongoing. Also, the bank disclosed the approval of Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas of the bank's acquisition of all the shares of stock of Banco Santander Philippines Inc. from Banco Santander Central Hispano. Also approved was the sale of Santander Investment and Securities Inc. to BDO Capital and Investment Corp.

* * *

MEDCO Holdings Inc. denied having any information that can explain the unusual movement in the trading of its share price that went from P0.0575 to P0.085 per share.

* * *

EASYCALL Communications Philippines Inc. will spin off its operating assets in its Internet and call center businesses into a wholly owned subsidiary. A special stockholders' meeting will be held on Sept. 17, 10 a.m. at the Lighthouse Theater, Port Area, Manila. Also, the company will sell some of its real estate properties in Cavite and Quezon City as well as condominium units in Galleria.

* * *

LEISURE and Resorts World Corp. clarified that of the eight bingo centers reportedly closed due to violations of the Local Government Code, only five are owned by the company's wholly owned subsidiary, AB Leisure Exponent Inc. Also, all five are still operating since no closure order was served.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

August 20, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.897827	1.000000	55.1310
Japan	Yen	0.007588	0.008451	0.4659
United Kingdom	Pound	1.425480	1.587700	87.5315
Hongkong	Dollar	0.115131	0.128233	7.0696
Switzerland	Franc	0.646664	0.720254	39.7083
Canada	Dollar	0.643373	0.716589	39.5063
Singapore	Dollar	0.513925	0.572410	31.5575
Australia	Dollar	0.588971	0.655996	36.1657
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.381631	2.652661	146.2439
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.239415	0.266660	14.7012
Brunei	Dollar	0.512458	0.570776	31.4675
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000106	0.000118	0.0065
Thailand	Baht	0.021582	0.02038	1.3252
UAE	Dirham	0.244460	0.272279	15.0110
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.113800	61.4049
Argentina	Peso	0.309596	0.344828	19.0107
Brazil	Real	0.300377	0.334560	18.4446
Denmark	Kroner	0.134536	0.149846	8.2612
India	Rupee	0.019625	0.021858	1.2051
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.236302	0.263193	14.5101
Mexico	New Peso	0.082879	0.092311	5.0892
New Zealand	Dollar	0.524953	0.584693	32.2347
Norway	Kroner	0.120218	0.133899	7.3820
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015601	0.017376	0.9580
South Africa	Rand	0.122623	0.136578	7.5297
Korea	Won	0.000761	0.000848	0.0468
Sweden	Kroner	0.107765	0.120029	6.6173
Syria	Pound	0.021377	0.023810	1.3127
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026214	0.029197	1.6097
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000563	0.000627	0.0346

Gov't, CalEnergy start review of Casecnan deal

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE REVIEW of the government's contract with CalEnergy International on the $650-million Casecnan irrigation/power project has finally started, paving the way for the possible revision of what civil society groups regard as "one of the most onerous contracts" with independent power producers.

A ranking government official said, in an interview, that the two parties had agreed on the talking points, which served as the basis of the discussions that have started last month.

"The talks finally pushed through," the official said. "CalEnergy had been firm against going into a review of its contract."

In a separate interview, CalEnergy vice president Roberto Eugenio admitted that the American power firm had entered into talks with the government but declined to give the details.

Eugenio, however, said CalEnergy was pursuing arbitration proceedings on its tax reimbursement claims amounting to $132 million.

"The case is pending and we believe it would take long. In fact, we have not had a single hearing yet."

CalEnergy, which controls the CE Casecnan Water and Energy Co., announced in August 2002 that it had sought international arbitration by the International Chamber of Commerce to oblige the National Irrigation Administration to reimburse taxes that, at the time, had accumulated to $52 million.

CE Casecnan officials have explained that the taxes were paid over five years during the construction of the project, during which the company invested about $700 million in private funds.

The officials said that under the tariff structure for the project, NIA was required to reimburse the tax payments.

The Office of the Government Corporate Counsel said NIA had no obligation to reimburse the payments since CE Casecnan appeared to have been granted a tax exemption or incentive.

But yesterday, Eugenio said the decision on whether or not the company would continue to pursue arbitration could be affected by the ongoing bilateral review of the IPP contract.

The facility diverts excess water from the Casecnan and Taan Rivers in Nueva Vizcaya through a 26-kilometer tunnel to a 150-megawatt power plant.

The water then goes to the Pantabangan Dam, from where irrigation water is supplied to a total of 135,000 hectares of rice fields.

The cooperation period under the build-operate-transfer contract lasts for 20 years.

The Casecnan contract is one of four IPP deals that has not gone through some form of revision through negotiations with the government.

Del Monte sees lower earnings

SINGAPORE—Del Monte Pacific Ltd., which sells pineapple-based processed products and beverages, yesterday reported a slightly higher second quarter profit but warned of lower full year earnings for 2003.

The food and beverage group posted a net profit of $8.5 million in the April-June quarter, up 1.4 percent from $8.4 million a year earlier. Revenue was at $49.5 million, down 0.3 percent from $49.7 million in the year-earlier quarter.

Del Monte, which owns the Del Monte brand in the Philippines, blamed the El Niño weather phenomenon for the decline in pineapple yields and increased production costs.

"Since reporting the first quarter results, the group has been seeing more severe than originally anticipated effects from the El Niño weather pattern," the firm said in a statement.

Del Monte said it now expected full year 2003 net profit to decline moderately from last year because of the ongoing impact from El Niño and the soft Philippine economy.

El Niño is the abnormal warming of waters in the eastern Pacific that occurs every four to five years. It distorts wind and rainfall patterns around the world, often causing deadly flooding and drought.

Del Monte also said it was pursuing various measures to control its exposure to troubled Italian canned food maker Cirio, which is its major shareholder.

Del Monte shares were down one cent at 56.5 Singapore cents by midday on Wednesday. Since the start of the year, the shares have risen about 31 percent, compared with a 20-percent rise in the key Straits Times Index in the same period. *Reuters*

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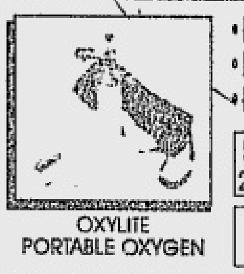
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Nickel seen as mining industry's future

BAGUIO CITY—Benguet Corp., which celebrated its centennial on Aug. 12, is pushing nickel as the "most exciting" metallic resource that could resuscitate the Philippine mining industry in the next 70 years.

Benjamin Philip Romualdez, Benguet Corp. president, said the country's nickel industry had drawn interest from both Japanese and American mining firms, which expect a high nickel demand following a global rebound from last decade's near recession.

This development, Romualdez said, should convince critics of the mining industry to consider the benefits that can be derived from extractive mining.

"Wouldn't it be better to export metals rather than to export people? Which is more destructive, (to extract metals) or to see families disintegrate?" Romualdez asked during a press conference on Tuesday.

He said critics should reassess their position about the industry given the potentials of the nickel market.

Benguet Corp. started operations on Aug. 12, 1903 by Metcalfe Clarke, Nelson Peterson and Henry Clyde in Itogon town, Benguet's first gold rush area. It recently celebrated its centennial anniversary as the country's first mining operation.

Romualdez said the local mining industry currently "feels wounded" because it had been "hobbled by poor government regulation performance, misdirected environmental policies, and environmental hooliganisms and extortionists."

He said the industry in its heyday accounted for 25 percent of the country's gross national product, or roughly $7.8 billion yearly. At present, the mining sector barely makes up for one percent of the GNP, he added.

However, industry developments have been encouraging, he said.

"Nickel is one of the most exciting and most strategic minerals in seven to 70 years," Romualdez said, because of its inputs to overseas steel industries.

Marcelo Bolano, Benguet Corp. senior vice president for mining operations, described nickel as one of the ferromagnetic materials, along with iron, steel and cobalt, which are raw materials for magnet manufacturing.

The mineral is also used as a protective and ornamental coating. It is converted into nickel steel alloy for doorknobs and bathroom fixtures.

The recent interest of Sumitomo Metals and Niseu Iwai Corp. in Palawan nickel fields signaled Japan's uncommon demand for the mineral, said Romualdez.

Bolano said Japan and Australia had perfected a nickel processing technology called high-pressure assets leeching (HPAL), and had been trying to dominate this market for a future metals boom.

Benguet Corp., which owns a nickel field in Zambales, has been negotiating with Sumitomo representatives to jointly tap the country's unexplored nickel resource, he said.

Nickel currently sells for $3 to $4 a pound. An American firm is also negotiating with Benguet Corp. for a merger, because it also owns substantial nickel fields.

Romualdez said the biggest markets for nickel would be Japan and China.

Unlike gold, nickel had become a strategic resource because of its contribution to the steel trade of developed countries, Bolano said.

Benguet Corp. currently thrives on its chromite production, he said.

Romualdez said the firm was also actively promoting its Kingking Copper Gold Project in Pantukan, Compostela Valley, which generates 75,000 metric tons of copper, 17,000 MT of cathode copper and 225,458 MT of gold.
Vincent Cabreza and Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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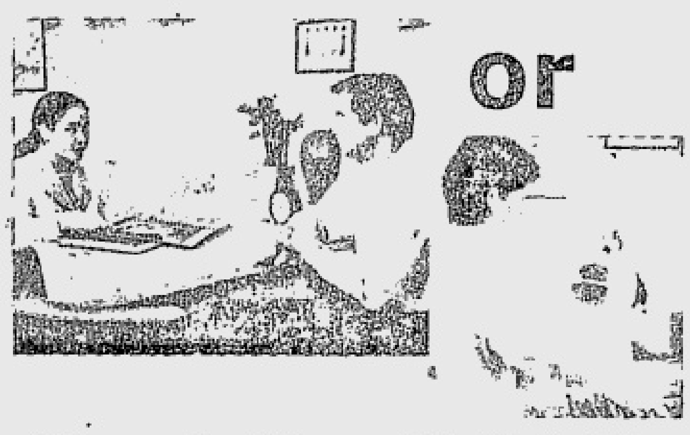

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MON.-FRI. (8 AM-7 PM) / SATURDAY (8 AM-3 PM)

Panay sees higher power generating capacity

POWER-HUNGRY Panay Island can now expect an additional generating capacity of 26 to 30 megawatts by April 2004 with the transfer of two generators from Pinamucan in Batangas to the area, an energy official said.

Froilan Tampinco, vice president of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), said current efforts to privatize National Power Corp.'s generating assets could result in the transfer and operation of two of Pinamucan's eight diesel-fired units within eight months.

In a related development, Napocor said in a statement that it had earmarked P535 million for a project that involves the dismantling, hauling, and installation of the generator sets.

The generators belonged to Enron Philippines before its 10-year build-operate-transfer contract with Napocor expired last July.

Napocor said it had scheduled for Oct. 6 the public bidding for the contract to transfer the Pinamucan generators to Dingle town in Iloilo.

The Pinamucan facility has four 12-MW units and four 14.63-MW sets, but Tampinco did not say what capacity the two initial sets that would run had.

Records from the Department of Energy showed that the four-province island had a dependable generating capacity of 73 MW, but that demand was hitting as high as 125 MW—which means a shortage of 52 MW.

In July, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said Panay was already suffering from daily power interruptions of between two and five hours.

Efforts to lure energy investments have attracted Korea Electric Power Co., which is planning to build a $150-million, 100-MW coal plant in the island. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

Subic Freeport generated 9,000 new jobs in 1st half

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT ZONE—The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority has exceeded its 2002 employment figure as it created more than 9,000 jobs in the first half of this year, according to SBMA Chair Felicito Payumo.

In his mid-year report, Payumo said that the freeport had 58,017 workers as of the first semester, compared with last year's 48,874 workers.

He said the figure represented the combined number of workers of the freezone locators, the SBMA and its subsidiary, the Freeport Service Corp. (FSC).

Locators have created additional 4,143 jobs in the first six months of the year, while SBMA and FSC have combined employees of 5,000.

Statistics released by the SBMA labor department showed that service-oriented companies here, particularly those engaged in various tourism-related businesses, have posted the biggest number of employees among other industries with 22,726 workers.

The manufacturing sector, despite the reported slowdown in its export earnings in the first six months, maintained a high employment figure of 18,034 workers.

Payumo, however, said he was hopeful that the export performance of the freeport would rebound in the second half of the year.

He also noted the rising number of workers in the construction business due to several ongoing development and other infrastructure projects implemented by private developers such as the Grande Island, Moon Bay Marina, Subic Techno Park Phase II project, Greenwoods Park and Subic Forest Adventure. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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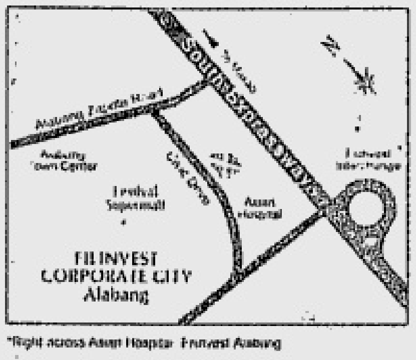

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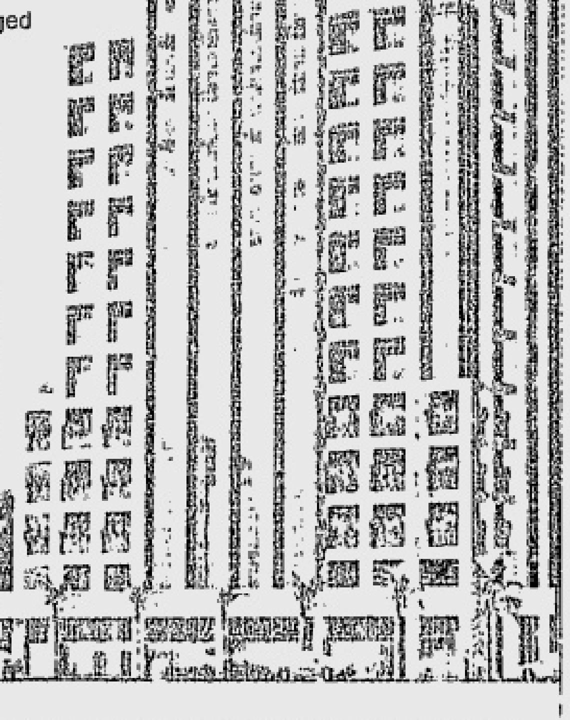

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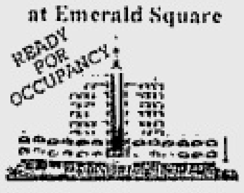

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Notice is hereby given that the intestate estate of the late Aurora Nitura, who died on February 9, 1996 at San Pedro, Laguna has been extra-judicially settled on August 19, 2003 at Pasay City before Manuel G. Garcia, a Notary Public for and in Pasay City per Doc. No. 483, Page 98, Book No. LVII, Series of 2003
(PDI-August 21, 28 and September 4, 2003)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

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Eligible Bidders shall be notified in writing as to when and where the Pre-Bid Conference will be set, including the availability of Bid Documents.

DCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality/informality of the bids and to accept only such bids which are advantageous to the District.

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National Power Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

NPC-PSD 2003-007

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)-PSD of NPC invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements

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DATE OF BIDDING: SEPTEMBER 17, 2003; 9:00 AM			
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7A2	REPLACEMENT PARTS FOR TURBINE VALVES	MCF-02-709(JP)	P 2,000,000.00
7A3	DRAG CHAIN CONVEYOR ASSY	MCF-02-714(JP)	P 9,000,000.00
DATE OF BIDDING: SEPTEMBER 17, 2003; 2:00 PM			
7B1	SPARE PARTS FOR UNIT-1 MAJOR OVERHAULING	MCF-02-724(JP)	Y 65,000,000.00
7B2	SELF PRIMING PUMP	MCF-03-261(LS)	P 935,000.00
7B3	POLE LINE HARDWARES	PLW-02-045(ZC)	P 20,609,400.64
DATE OF BIDDING: SEPTEMBER 18, 2003; 9:00 AM			
7C1	SODIUM HYDROXIDE (CAUSTIC SODA)	3MGP-03-0105(ZC)	P 7,350,000.00
7C2	MAIN OIL PUMP ASSEMBLY	3MGP-03-0187(RP)	P 12,609,000.00
7C3	J.O.-REPAIR/RECONDITIONING OF 13 UNITS COOLING TOWER GEAR REDUCER OF UNIT 3 (6 UNITS) AND UNIT 5 (7 UNITS)	3TGP-03-013(RP)	P 1,400,000.00
DATE OF BIDDING: SEPTEMBER 18, 2003; 2:00 PM			
7D1	PROTECTION RELAY	3BAC-03-0311(RP)	P 990,000.00
7D2	STI ELECTRO PNEUMATIC POSITIONER/CONVERTER & PNEUMAX PNEUMATIC DISTRIBUTOR	3BAC-03-0380(RP)	P 1,978,086.00
7D3	J.O. ON-SITE REPAIR/BUILT-UP/RECONDITIONING OF GROOVE SLIP RING EMPLOYING THE SELECTRON PROCESS OF ELECTROCHEM METALLIZING FOR BAC-MAN I UNIT 1	3BAC-03-0331(RP)	P 3,500,000.00
DATE OF BIDDING: SEPTEMBER 24, 2003; 9:00 AM			
7E1	J.O. ADDITIONAL REPAIR WORKS FOR PRIMARY E.P. FLY ASH STORAGE SILO CONCRETE ROOF DECK AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES	2BCF-03-119(ZC)	P 3,518,160.00
7E2	PRESSURE REDUCING VALVE	2BCF-02-862(ZC)	P 2,200,000.00
7E3	SUPPLY OF VARIOUS CONSTRUCTION MAT'LS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BCFTPP TRAINING CENTER	2BCF-03-535(NY)	P 1,929,910.00
DATE OF BIDDING: SEPTEMBER 25, 2003; 10:00 AM			
7F1	PARTS FOR PIELSTICK 16PC 2 5V 400 DIESEL ENGINE	5PDPI-03-144(JS)	P 4,386,816.00
7F2	J.O. FOR THE REHAB OF THE CENTRALIZED AIRCONDITIONING SYSTEM	5LGP-03-200(LS)	P 8,200,000.00
DATE OF BIDDING: SEPTEMBER 25, 2003; 2:00 PM			
7G1	ELIMINATOR DRIFT	5PGP1-03-087(AC)	P 6,850,000.00
7G2	VARIOUS PLYWOOD & LUMBER TREATED	5PGP1-03-087(AC)	P 3,104,400.00
DATE OF BIDDING: SEPTEMBER 26, 2003; 9:00 AM			
7H1	PARTS FOR ROTARY LOBE BLOWER	MCF-03-132(JP)	P 1,500,000.00
7H2	VARIOUS BRONZE, MAGNOLIA, SAE 64	MCF-03-267(JP)	P 981,356.00
7H3	REPAIR KIT 4" DIA. KTM BALL VALVE	MCF-03-221(JP)	P 1,400,000.00
DATE OF BIDDING: SEPTEMBER 26, 2003; 2:00 PM			
7I1	GLOBE VALVE/ANGLE NEEDLE VALVE, BRAND TOA	MCF-03-215(LS)	Y 8,362,400.00
7I2	PARTS FOR AIR COMPRESSOR	MCF-03-203(LS)	P 1,593,913.00

NOTE: A Pre-Bidding Conference will be held at the bidding room for the following bidding schedules on:

7A1-7A3	SEPTEMBER 3, 2003, 9:00 AM	7E1-7E3	SEPTEMBER 10, 2003, 2:00 PM
7B1 & 7B3	SEPTEMBER 3, 2003, 2:00 PM	7F1-7F2	SEPTEMBER 11, 2003, 10:00 AM
7C1-7C2	SEPTEMBER 4, 2003, 10:00 AM	7G1, 7G2 & 7I1	SEPTEMBER 11, 2003, 2:00 PM
7C3 & 7D3	SEPTEMBER 4, 2003, 2:00 PM		

Complete sets of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Services Division, Materials Management Dept. of NPC, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of PHP 100.00 per schedule starting on August 13, 2003 issuance of eligibility and bid documents mornings only, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. No bid documents will be issued 7 days before the date of bidding.

Bids will be received at the assigned Bidding Room, PSD, MMD, NPC, Diliman, Quezon City on the date and time specified above after which Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders. Certificate of Registration issued by former Genco Offices will be honored provided that the Certification is still valid.

Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission, execution in accordance with the IRR of "Executive Order 40".

The Bidder shall furnish as part of his/her bid, a bid security in the amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid in the form of Cash, Manager's/Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit - One Percent (1%), Surety Bond Two and a half percent (2.5%), ponar and callable on demand issued by a Surety or Insurance Company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commission.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability whatsoever to affect expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids; and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee
PSD-NPC

(PDI - Aug. 13 & 21, 2003)

TENDER

www.henrybutcher.com

ACQUISITION OF 100% OF THE SHAREHOLDING IN A PALM OIL MILL FOR SALE BY TENDER

Tenders Due Noon, Friday 12 September 2003

BACKGROUND
The company for sale is Kenram Industrial & Development Inc ('KIDI'). The mill, which produces crude palm oil (CPO), palm kernel oil (PKO) and palm kernel cake (PKC), started in 1972 at a capacity of 4 tons of FFB (Fresh Fruit Bunch) per hour using 2 hydraulic presses. In 1975 it was upgraded to 10 tons per hour using 1 screw press. In 1979 the mill was upgraded to 20 tons per hour, its current capacity. The maximum design capacity is 24 tons per hour. The majority of the mill plant is Stork, manufactured in Amsterdam. The present owners have decided at Board level to sell 100% of the shareholding in the mill.

PRODUCTS AND CAPACITIES
The Crude Palm Oil (CPO) Output is 3.6 tons per hour at 18% Oil Extraction Ratio (OER). Kernel Output is 0.8 - 1.0 MT tons of kernel per hour at 4-5% Palm Kernel Extraction Ratio (PKER). The Palm Kernel Crushing Plant Capacity is 1.35 MT tons of kernel at full capacity. The Palm Kernel Oil Output is 0.54 MT of Palm Kernel Oil (PKO) per hour at 40% PKER and full capacity. The Palm Kernel Cake Output is 0.74 MT tons of Palm Kernel Cake (PKC) per hour at 55% Palm Kernel Cake Extraction Ratio (PKCER) at full capacity.

There has been numerous upgrading and new plant installation since 1990. A complete list is available on request.

Located:	Isulan, Sultan Kudarat (near General Santos), Mindanao, Philippines
Viewing:	Strictly by appointment only
Tender Due Date:	Noon, Friday 12 September 2003. Full set of Tender Documents available on request.
Buyers Premium:	5% of the sale price.

HENRY BUTCHER
Goindustry INDUSTRIAL ASSET DISPOSAL & VALUATION

HENRY BUTCHER INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES INC.
Rm. 102 Jolliland Bldg., 670 Edsa, Pasay City, Philippines
Tel No.: +(63-2) 852-2910 * 11 Fax No.: +(63-2) 831-9507
E-mail:manila@henrybutcher.com
Website: www.henrybutcher.com/www.goindustry.com

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

Date : August 14, 2003
Reference No.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1 Contract Code Sp99.N4P4.Vc-0282
Title Construction, Erection and Installation of 138 & 69KV Substation Equipment under the Negros IV - Panay IV Substation Projects, Schedule III - Panitan Substation
Location Brgy. Timpas, Panitan, Capiz

2. The works to be completed by the successful bidder shall consist of furnishing all superintendence, labor, materials, supplies, tools and equipment (except materials and equipment specified to be furnished by TRANSCO), and constructing complete the substation and installing substation equipment to complete the Construction Erection and Installation of 138 & 69kV Substation Equipment for Schedule III - Panitan Substation in accordance with the Plans and Specifications. The work also includes expansion of the existing control house and construction of new genset/pump house

3. The Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid is TWENTY THREE MILLION EIGHT HUNDRED TWENTY ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY & 00/100 (PHP23,821,280.00) from the Internal Cash Generation (ICG) of National Transmission Corporation.

4 Application for Eligibility is open to Filipino contractors who have the legal, technical and financial requisites of the contract/project to be bid with the following License and Registration Particulars:
License Particular at least "Category A - Specialty: Electrical Works"
Registration Particular at least "Medium B - Specialty: Electrical Works"

5. Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria and only Eligible Bidders shall be invited by Transco in the bidding. All bids equal to or lower than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be evaluated based on the responsiveness of the contractor's offer to the contract under bidding subject to Postqualification before an award is made. Bid Prices submitted higher than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be rejected and returned outright

6. Eligibility Documents and Forms will be available for Issuance on August 14, 2003 at the Bids and Contracts Management Department, Ground Floor, Transco Bldg. Power Complex, Building No. 2, NPC OBC, National Transmission Corporation Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1104, Telefax No.: 921-2308 upon presentation of Letter of Intent, Contractor's License and a payment of non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 per copy.

7. Deadline for submission of duly accomplished Application for Eligibility, Forms documents and statements shall be on or before September 12, 2003 and shall be submitted at the registration office and address mentioned above. If the date is a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted

8. Contractor, not yet included in the Transco's List of Registered Contractors, who wishes to participate in the public bidding, in order to facilitate eligibility check/screening, are requested to register with the registration office mentioned above by submitting the following basic requirements which should be maintained current and updated at least once a year. A Certificate of Registration will be issued to contractors upon approval.
- Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) business name registration or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registration certificate, as appropriate;
- Mayor's permit and/or municipal license for the current year;
- Taxpayer's Identification Number;
- Notarized statement of the prospective bidder that it is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation, including, in the case of procurement of civil works, non-inclusion in the "blacklist" or contractors issued by the CIAP
- Audited financial statements, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions, for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing, among others, the prospective bidder's total and current assets and liabilities inclusive of Income Tax Return and Receipts;
- Contractor's License.

9. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any application or all Bids or request for registration without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.

19. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address

(Sgd.) WINIFREDO SM. PANGILINAN
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Aug 16, 18 & 21 2003)

GROWTH WITH EQUITY IN MINDANAO (GEM) PROGRAM

A Project of the United States Agency for International Development
The General Contractor is THE LOUIS BERGER GROUP, INC.
Tel: (6382) 225-1596 • Fax: (6382) 225-1479
USAID Contract No: 492-C-00-02-00018-00

Invitation to Bid for Sitio Sarmiento Bridge Project

1. The Government of the Philippines has received a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) towards the cost of the Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program. A portion of the proceeds of this grant will be used to fund the **Sitio Sarmiento Bridge Project** for which this Invitation to Bid is being issued. The Louis Berger Group, Inc. (LBG), through the Office of the Chief of Party of GEM in Davao City, is implementing the Project.

2. Bidding is open to all firms who have been previously prequalified by GEM to undertake Mid-Scale Infrastructure Projects (MSIP), regardless of the sector, e.g., port, road and bridges, water supply, etc., the firm was prequalified in. In addition to this newspaper advertisement, GEM will send individual invitations to all of these prequalified firms

3. Interested bidders may obtain further information and/or secure the bidding documents from the Deputy Chief of Party for Contracts at the following address

Deputy Chief of Party for Contracts, Growth with Equity in Mindanao Program
2/F, 1 Ladislawa Bldg., Ladislawa Ave., Buhangin, 8000 Davao City, Philippines
Phone: (82) 225-1569 to 1575 ; Fax: (82) 225-1479 ; E-mail: gem@mindanao.org

4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders on submission of a written application to the above office and on payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Thousand Pesos (Php 3000) during regular office hours from August 21-29, 2003. For those who will be unable to obtain their documents in Davao City, copies will be made available during the pre-bid conference to be held on August 28, 2003 at 1:30 p.m. at the Conference Room of the GEM Cotabato Area Office located at the 4th Floor, Elena V. Co Building, Don Rufino Alonzo St., Cotabato City. Only two representatives from each firm shall be allowed to attend the pre-bid conference. ATTENDANCE TO THE PRE-BID CONFERENCE IS A PREREQUISITE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THIS BIDDING.

5. GEM has arranged site inspection forcontractors' representatives on the morning of August 29, 2003. Contractor representatives shall be responsible for their own transportation to and from the project site.

6. Sealed bids must be delivered to the GEM Cotabato Area Office at the address stated in Item No. 4 above on or before 15:00 hours on September 18, 2003. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of a Bank Guarantee or Surety Bond issued by any bank or surety company listed in Appendix II and Appendix III of the bid documents in favor of The Louis Berger Group, Inc.

7. Bids shall be opened thereafter at 15:30 hours on the same day at the same place in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend. In case the specified date of bid opening is declared a public holiday, the bids shall be received and opened at the same time and place on the next working day

8. In accordance with USAID procurement regulations for construction services, the bid opening will consist only of opening the bids, reading the bid offers, and tallying the bid prices. The detailed evaluation of the bid prices and accompanying bid documents shall be done internally by GEM staff in the presence of USAID representatives.

9. LBG will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with preparation or delivery of bids

10. Bids delivered after the time and date noted above shall be declared and marked "LATE".

11. LBG reserves the right to accept any bid or reject any or all bids without assigning any reason and without incurring any liability to the bidder or bidders

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THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
NATIONAL STEEL CORPORATION

NOTICE OF INVITATION FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS FOR THE LEASE WITH OPTION TO PURCHASE OF THE NATIONAL STEEL CORPORATION ILIGAN PLANT

Sealed applications for offers for the lease with option to purchase of the Iligan Steel Plant of the National Steel Corporation (NSC) shall be received at the NSC Office, Unit 2701, 88 Corporate Center Bldg., corner Sedeño and Valero Sts., Salcedo Village, Makati City with telephone numbers 752-4494 and 752-4497 on September 30, 2003 no later than 3:00 PM. For purposes thereof, the offer forms and guidelines, upon payment of a non-refundable registration fee of FORTY THOUSAND PESOS (P40,000.00), shall be available at the NSC Office in the aforementioned address starting from August 25, 2003.

A pre-offer conference shall be held on September 1, 2003 at 9:30 AM at the NSC Office in the aforementioned address. All clarifications and inquiries on the Pre-qualifications and Tender Documents shall be made during the said pre-conference.

Offers must be accompanied by a proposal bond in an amount set out in the Tender Documents. The proposal bond shall be valid for a period of one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the opening of offers.

The Management Committee of NSC reserves the right to reject any or all offers, or to waive any informalities in the Offers received, or to pre-qualify Offerors, and/or accept Offers for the lease of the Iligan Steel Plant, which is most advantageous to the National Steel Corporation.

All communications must be addressed to:

Management Committee
National Steel Corporation
Unit 2701, 88 Corporate Center Bldg.,
Corner Sedeño and Valero Sts.,
Salcedo Village, Makati City

(Sgd.) DANILO L. CONCEPCION
Liquidator

(Sgd.) LORENZO V. TAN
Chairman Management Committee

(PDI–Aug. 20 & 21, 2003)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

Date : 14 August, 2003
Reference No.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1 Contract Code Sp02.QSSP.Ve-0336
Title Construction, Erection and Installation of 138 & 69KV Substation Equipment for Quiot Substation
Location . Cebu City

2 The works to be completed by the successful bidder shall consist of furnishing all superintendence, labor, materials, supplies, tools and equipment (except materials and equipment specified to be furnished by TRANSCO), and constructing complete the substation and installing substation equipment to complete the Construction Erection and Installation of 138 & 69kV Substation Equipment for Quiot Substation in accordance with the Plans and Specifications. The work also includes construction of new control house, guardhouse, genset/pump house, oil water separator and water tank and water tank foundation.

3. The Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid is **FORTY NINE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED FIFTY THREE (PHP49,700,153.00)** from the Internal Cash Generation (ICG) of National Transmission Corporation

4. Application for Eligibility is open to Filipino contractors who have the legal, technical and financial requisites of the contract/project to be bid with the following License and Registration Particulars:
License Particular at least "Category AA - Specialty: Electrical Works"
Registration Particular at least "Large A - Specialty: Electrical Works"

5. Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria and only Eligible Bidders shall be invited by Transco in the bidding. All bids equal to or lower than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be evaluated based on the responsiveness of the contractor's offer to the contract under bidding subject to Postqualification before an award is made. Bid Prices submitted higher than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be rejected and returned outright

6. Eligibility Documents and Forms will be available for Issuance on August 14, 2003 at the Bids and Contracts Management Department, Ground flr., Transco Bldg Power Complex, Building No. 2, NPC OBC, National Transmission Corporation Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1104, Telefax No.: 921-2308 upon presentation of Letter of Intent, Contractor's License and a payment of non-refundable fee of P800.00 per copy.

7 **Deadline for submission** of duly accomplished Application for Eligibility, Forms documents and statements shall be on or before **September 12, 2003** and shall be submitted at the registration office and address mentioned above. If the date is a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.

8. Contractor, not yet included in the Transco's List of Registered Contractors, who wishes to participate in the public bidding, in order to facilitate eligibility check screening, are requested to register with the registration office mentioned above by submitting the following basic requirements which should be maintained current and updated at least once a year. A Certificate of Registration will be issued to contractors upon approval.
- Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) business name registration or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registration certificate, as appropriate;
- Mayor's permit and/or municipal license for the current year;
Taxpayer's Identification Number;
- Notarized statement of the prospective bidder that it is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation, including, in the case of procurement of civil works, non-inclusion in the "blacklist" or contractors issued by the CIAP.
- Audited financial statements, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions, for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing among others, the prospective bidder's total and current assets and liabilities inclusive of Income Tax Return and Receipts;
- Contractor's License.

9. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any Application or all Bids or request for registration without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government

19 Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) WINIFREDO SM. PANGILINAN
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Aug 16, 18 & 21, 2003)

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
PNOC Energy Companies Bldg., Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1201 Makati City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO Tel. No. 893-6001/1320
PNOC The Energy Company

RE-INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC – Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

FABRICATION AND DELIVERY OF SEVEN (7) UNITS OFFICE VAN
FOR NORTHERN NEGROS GEOTHERMAL PROJECT
EDC03-076-1

The Approved Budget is P3,153,720.00 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 90 calendar days.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o I.M. Corcuera) starting August 20, 2003 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Two Hundred (P200.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on August 29, 2003, 10:00 a.m. at the CAC Conference Rm., Bldg. 5 at the above. Site inspection will follow thereafter.

Application for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at the above address not later than 2:00 p.m. of September 11, 2003 and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

(Sgd.) SERGIO A. F. APOSTOL
Chairman & President / CEO

(PDI–Aug. 21, 2003)

Republika ng Pilipinas
KAGAWARAN NG PAGSASAKA
PAMBANSANG PANGASIWAAN SA NUTRISYON
(NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL)
Villamor Interchange, South Superhighway
Makati City

NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL
Announcement of Vacant Positions

NUTRITION OFFICER V (NPPD-CO) – SG-24; Item No. NNCB-NUTO5-1-1998; Masteral degree; 4 years in position/s involving management and supervision; 24 hours training in management and supervision; 2nd level eligibility.
NUTRITION OFFICER IV (NSD-CO) – SG-22; Item No. NNCB-NUTO4-4-1998; Bachelor's degree relevant to job; 3 years relevant experience; 16 hours relevant training; 2nd level eligibility.
NUTRITION OFFICER III (NPPD-CO, NSD-CO, REGION V [LEGASPI CITY] & REGION VI [ILOILO CITY]) – SG-18; Item Nos. NNCB-NUTO3-1-1998; NNCB-NUT03-14-1998, NNCB-NUTO3-3-1998 & NNCB-NUTO3-4-1998; Bachelor's degree relevant to job; 2 years relevant experience; 8 hours relevant training; 2nd level eligibility.
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT II (OED-CO) – SG-17; Item No. NNCB-EXA2-1-1998; Bachelor's degree relevant to job; 1 year relevant experience; 4 hours relevant training; 2nd level eligibility.
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER II (AD-CO) – SG-15; Item No. NNCB-ADO2-1-1998; Bachelor's degree; 1 year experience; 4 hours training; 2nd level eligibility.
NUTRITION OFFICER II (NPPD-CO & NSD-CO) – SG-14; Item No. NNCB-NUTO2-14-1998 & NNCB-NUT02-3-1998, Bachelor's degree relevant to job; 1 year relevant experience; 4 hours relevant training; 2nd level eligibility.
CASHIER I [(AD-CO) – SG-10; Item No. NNCB-CASH1-1-1998; Bachelor's degree; no experience required; no training required; 2nd level eligibility.
ACCOUNTING CLERK II (FD-CO) – SG-6; Item No. NNCB-AC2-1-1998; Completion of 2 years studies in college, no experience required; no training required; 1st level eligibility.
DATA CONTROLLER I (FD-CO) – SG-6; Item No. NNCB-DCTL1-1-1998; Completion of 2 years studies in college; no training required; 1st level eligibility.
CLERK II (AD-CO) – SG-1; Item No. NNCB-CK2-2-1998; Completion of 2 years studies in college; no experience required; no training required; 1st level eligibility.
DRIVER I (REGION XI [DAVAO CITY]) – SG-3; Item No. NNCB-DRVI-7-1998; elementary school graduate; no experience required; no training required; professional driver's license.

For further information, please contact Mr. Benjamin C. Formento, Human Resource Management Officer III, Personnel Section, Administrative Division, tel. no. 892-85-75.

(Sgd.) CAROLINA BAUTISTA-BATALLONES
Deputy Executive Director

(PDI–August 21, 2003)

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National Power Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
NPC-MMSD 2003-003

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)-MMSD of NPC invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements

SCHEDULE	DATE/TIME & PLACE OF BIDDING	ITEM DESCRIPTION	INQUIRY NO.	ABC
	Sept. 22, 2003 10:00 AM Kañao Room	Hauling Services of Diesel Fuel from designated origin to diff. NPC SPUG-Luzon Power Plants (Single Stage Variation Bidding)	PB030922-MMVB9245	41,023,200.00
II	Sept. 10, 2003 10:00 AM Pahiyas Room	Digital Multi-Function electricity Meter, Potential Transformer, Current Transformer & Portable Configuration Modifier for upgrading of metering equipment for Luzon Operations	PB030910-MMMAM9246	3,800,000.00
III	Sept. 12, 2003 10:00 AM Pahiyas Room	Mechanical Parts for Genset of Dinagat DPP & Hikdop DPP "Dale"	PB030912-MMVB9247	1,410,000.00
IV	Sept. 15, 2003 10:00 AM Kañao Room	Mechanical Parts for Kalamansig DPP, Tempos DPP & Cuyo DPP "Perkins"	PB030915-MMVB9248	3,931,164.42
V	Sept. 17, 2003 10:00 AM MMD Conf. Room	Electrical S/P for Tablas DPP "Dale"	PB030917-MMVB9249	2,015,140.00
VI	Sept. 18, 2003 10:00 AM MMD Conf. Room	Replacement Parts for the Preventive Maintenance of "Daihatsu" Engine for PB 105	PB030918-MMAM9256	24,026,272.00
VII	Sept. 19, 2003 10:00 AM Kañao Room	Electrical S/P for Tablas DPP "MAN B&W"	PB030919-MMAM9250	1,058,500.00
VIII	Sept. 24, 2003 10:00 AM Pahiyas Room	S/P for PB 120 "Daihatsu" Engine 6DK-32	PB030924-MMJP9251	3,202,350.00
IX	Sept. 26, 2003 10:00 AM Morones Room	Parts for Tablas DPP MONL/BOAC DPP "CKD"	PB030826-MMAM0252	6,953,429.00
X	Sept. 29, 2003 10:00 AM Kañao Room	Injector Assy. S/P and various Electrical parts of Power Barge 109, 580 KW Genset & Pilar 5 DPP "Dale Perkins"	PB030716-MMAM8738(PB2)	6,406,486.00

NOTE: A Pre-bidding Conference will be held for the following bidding schedules:

Schedule	Date	Time	Place
I	August 25, 2003	10:00 AM	Pahiyas Function Room
II	August 25, 2003	2:00 PM	Pahiyas Function Room
III	August 25, 2003	3:00 PM	Pahiyas Function Room
IV	August 26, 2003	10:00 AM	MMD Conference Room
V	August 26, 2003	11:00 AM	MMD Conference Room
VI & VIII	August 26, 2003	2:00 PM	MMD Conference Room
VII	August 26, 2003	3:00 PM	MMD Conference Room
IX	August 27, 2003	2:00 PM	MMD Conference Room
X	August 27, 2003	3:00 PM	MMD Conference Room

Complete sets of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the Materials Management Services Division, Materials Management Dept. of NPC, Diliman, Quezon City with Tel. No. 9245357/9245477 upon payment of non-refundable fee of PHP100.00 per schedule starting on August 14, 2003. No bid documents will be issued 3 days before the date of bidding.

Bids will be received at the assigned Bidding Room, MMSD, MMD, NPC, Diliman, Quezon City on the date and time specified above after which Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders. Certificate of Registration/Accreditation issued by Former Genco Offices, MMSD and PSD will be honored provided that the Certification is still valid.

Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution in accordance with the IRR of "Executive Order No. 40."

The Bidder shall furnish as part of his/her bid, a bid security in the amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid in the form of Cash, Manager's/Cashier's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit - One Percent (1%), Bank Guarantee - One and a half percent (1.5%), Surety Bond - Two and a half percent (2.5%), penal and callable on demand issued by a Surety or Insurance Company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commission.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

(Sgd.) LORENZO S. MARCELO
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
MMSD-NPC

(PDI - Aug 14 & 21, 2003)

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Juan Bautista Calleja

Retired teacher, banker & businessman

Born Dec. 27, 1908, died in the Grace of our Lord on August 14, 2003 at the age of 94.

His children **Jean, Isidoro, Ma. Celeste, Lea, & Sally**; in-laws, **Pura, Carlota, Jose, Jesus, & Levino**; grandchildren: **Salome, Guia, Samson & Glee, Tito & Terry, Jeanette, James, Lee, Lauren & Dave, Gerry, Trixie, Nina & Joel, Rhia & Kai, Myra & Red, Jona, Jay, Kathryn & Greg. Karen, Len, Jon & Dean**; great grandchildren and relatives request the pious readers to rejoice with them at His return to our Creator.

Interment will be on Saturday, August 23, 2003 after Mass at 1:00 p.m. at the church of St. James the Greater, Libon, Albay.

ATTY. CARMELO A. BETITA

Peacefully joined his Creator
on August 17, 2003 at the age of 61
the eldest son of the late Hernardo Betita
& Carmen (Nena) Betita.

His loving wife	Charry
brothers & sister	Henny Hernando Jr. & Evelyn Hector & Nelia
Children	Andre & Vicky Patricia Josef Karl & Dada Gretchen
Grandchildren	Francie, Alisa, Paola Iggyboy, Adrian Emilio

request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Luna Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park) Parañaque City.

Cremation will be on Saturday, August 23, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park Crematorium after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

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FRANCISCO "FRANKIE" B. VERGARA

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
at the age of 56 on August 18, 2003.

His loving wife **Cora**; son **Edwin**; daughter-in-law **Avhy**; parents **Peping & Odding**; brother **Nick**; grandchildren **Icci, Nica, Mae, Angela, Michael, Caitlin, Joseph & Macmac**; nephew **Michael**; niece **Sheila**; uncles & aunties, cousins, mother-in-law, brothers & sisters-in-law, request the pious readers to join in praying for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Premiere I Suite of Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Saturday, August 23, 2003 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after Mass at 9:00 a.m, Premiere I Suite, Loyola Memorial Chapels, Inc. Guadalupe, Makati City.

ANTHONY SIDEÑO-STA. ROMANA

Peacefully joined his Creator on
August 17, 2003 at the age of 25.

His parents, **Antonio & Marilyn**, brother **Daniel** & sister **Analyn** request not to pray for his soul because **Anthony** had accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord.

Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." John 11:25-26.

His remains lie in state at Marian Memorial Chapels, Marcos Highway, Antipolo City with Tel. Nos. 645-1845 and 645-1855.

Interment will be on Saturday, August 23, 2003 at Heaven's Gate 2 Memorial Park, Antipolo City at 8:00 o'clock in the morning.

I am
the way,
the truth
and
the life.
No one
comes
to the
Father
except
through
Me.

John 14:6

"I am the resurrection and the life he who believes in Me will live even though he dies, and whoever believes in Me will never die."

German Cuizon Peralejo

of Gapan, Nueva Ecija

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on August 19, 2003 at the age of 93.

His bereaved brothers and sisters-in-law, Ricardo & Lita, Cezar & Marina; sisters and brothers-in-law, Lemerina (†) & Fernando Clemente (†), Dr. Luz (†) & Dr. Aurelio Lopez (†); nephews and nieces and other relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Mortuary of St. Rita de Cascia Parish, Phil-Am Homes, Quezon City. His body will be brought to his hometown, Gapan, Nueva Ecija on Friday, August 22, 2003.

Interment will be on Sunday, August 24, 2003 at Gapan Memorial Park.

ZOILO PINEDA CAPAN

of **Bo. Talaga, Capas Tarlac** and **Pasig City**

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on August 19, 2003 at the age of 53.

His loving wife **Nora** and son **Aaron**, sisters and brothers, nephews, and nieces and other relatives/friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Marian Memorial Chapels, Marcos Highway, Antipolo City with Tel. Nos. 645-1845 and 645-1855.

Interment will be announced later.

CARMELITA RUBIO ANG

passed away in Jersey City, U.S.A.
on 13 August 2003

Her bereaved brothers & sisters, nephews & nieces and grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body will be brought to the Calamba Mortuary, Calamba City, Laguna on 21 August 2003.

Interment will be on 23 August 2003, at the Rizal Memorial Cemetery after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Saint John the Baptist Church, Calamba City, Laguna.

ESTER D. CALINOG

April 5, 1927 - August 17, 2003
(widow of the late **JOSE O. CALINOG**)

Her children **Peachy** and **Jonas Gallardo**; **Honey**; **Nonoy** and **Susan**; grandchildren **Jop, Jackie** and **Jorine**; **Stephanie** and **Jeffrey**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Chapel, Magallanes Village, Makati City.

Interment will be on Friday, August 22, 2003, 10:00 a.m. at the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque City.

SIMPLICIO HIMOR IGNACIO
'ABA'

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on August 18, 2003 at the age of 68.

His bereaved wife **Lourdes Laxina**; mother **Asuncion Himor**; children **Florante, Laura** and **Aladin**; children-in-law **Leticia** and **Aida**; grandchildren **Aislinn, Adriel Alyssa, Ma. Flerida, Ma. Josefina** and **Juan Domingo**, brothers **Rodolfo & Jasmin, Manuel, Marianito & Annie** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Sto. Niño Parish Church, Pandacan, Manila.

Interment will be on Saturday, August 23, 2003 at Makati South Cemetery after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

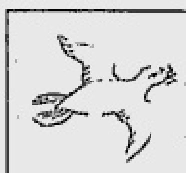
CRISTINA TAN GATMAYTAN

Peacefully joined our Lord
on August 20, 2003 at the age of 87.

Her loving family, relatives, and friends, request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine Parish, Doña Juana Rodriguez Ave., Broadway, New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment to be announced.



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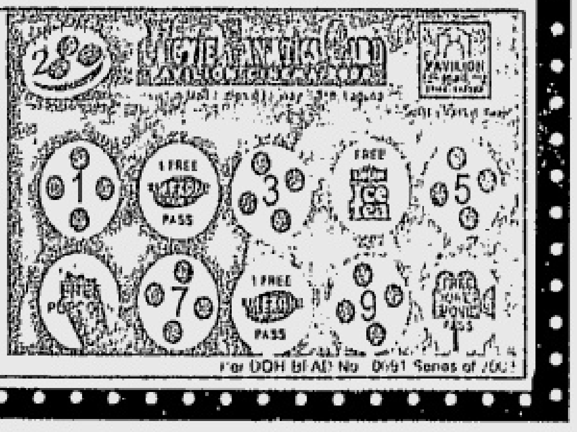

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BUSINESS

BIR reduces tax imposed on 'tiangges'

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has given in to the clamor of *tiangge* operators for the relaxation of an order issued in April imposing a P200 tax daily, consisting of P150 in business tax and P50 in income tax.

Finance Undersecretary Grace Tan said the BIR had already drafted a regulation amending the April order.

In the draft, Tan said the BIR had removed the income tax component and kept only the P150 business tax daily, which is equivalent to P4,500 per month.

It, likewise, limited the coverage of the policy to *tiangges* that operate only on holidays and special occasions. This means that those that have set permanent shops in specific locations are exempted from the order.

The income tax was scrapped after the government realized that the imposition of which did not have a legal basis.

If approved by Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, the new regulation would be issued soon and would be implemented 15 days from publication in a newspaper.

"The regulation will redefine the coverage of the tax policy. It will be applied only on those that are operating on temporary basis like the hobbyists selling their products. It will cover the ones putting up shops during holidays and special events," said the finance official.

Tan said that unlike the previous regulation, the P150 business tax that would be imposed was a final tax.

Taxing *tiangge* operators is aimed at bringing the underground economy to the surface.

Government officials said that despite their profitability, *tiangge* operators were able to "escape the claws of the BIR given their nomadic fashion of doing business."

The BIR, however, has no estimates on the potential revenue that can be generated from the order.

"What used to be a seasonal affair held only during the Christmas holidays has evolved into a recurring event. Profitable business enterprises have emerged but have escaped taxation as these businesses operated in a nomadic fashion," noted Camacho in the BIR regulation issued in April.

Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. complained that as *tiangges* had been moving from one location to another, it was harder for the BIR to track them down and collect from them.

Parayno said the BIR had decided to start taxing the *tiangges* as they became profitable enterprises.

"The growing popularity of using this medium to sell goods and services has compelled the bureau to employ a scheme to plug revenue leaks and tap additional revenue sources," said the BIR chief.

Imposing taxes on *tiangge* operators formed part of the ongoing effort of the BIR to improve tax collection, prevent tax evasion, and reduce the government's budget deficit over time.

The regulation complements the BIR's tax compliance and saturation drive launched in April. The spot tax audits on 96,000 establishments yielded substantial level of violations.

Of the visited establishments, the BIR said that more than 90 percent were caught violating the bureau's regulations including the requirement to register, issue official receipts, and to register books of accounts.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

This is to formally notify you that the Quasi-Reorganization and Debt-to-Equity Conversion Applications of **ADVENT CAPITAL AND FINANCE CORPORATION** (formerly All AsiaCapital and Trust Corporation) ("ACFC") have been approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on 03 July 2003.

The conversion of the balance of the unpaid and unsecured debts of ACFC into voting, redeemable preferred shares in ACFC will be implemented starting 15 September 2003. Each unsecured creditor is thus requested to come to ACFC's head office at the 6th Floor, All AsiaCapital Center, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City to sign the necessary Deeds of Assignment to effect the foregoing debt-to-equity swap.

For individuals, the following documents must be presented:

a. Valid Passport and/or Driver's License and/or identification with picture; and
b. 2003 Residence Certificate.

In the event the individual cannot personally appear to sign the Deed of Assignment, the following documents must be presented:

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b. Valid Passport and/or Driver's License and/or identification with picture of the person authorized to sign the necessary Deed of Assignment; and
c. 2003 Residence Certificate of the person authorized to sign the necessary Deed of Assignment.

For corporations, the following documents must be presented:

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b. Valid Passport and/or Driver's License and/or identification with picture of the person authorized to sign the necessary Deed of Assignment; and
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Please note, however, that the conversion of the unpaid and unsecured debts of the clients of ACFC's Trust Department into voting, redeemable preferred shares will be undertaken for and on their behalf by Atty. Danilo L. Concepcion, the Rehabilitation Receiver of ACFC. Atty. Concepcion will hold said papers in trust/escrow for the clients of ACFC's Trust Department pending a full reconciliation of their accounts pursuant to the directive of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

(Sgd.) Atty. Johnny Y. Aruego, Jr.
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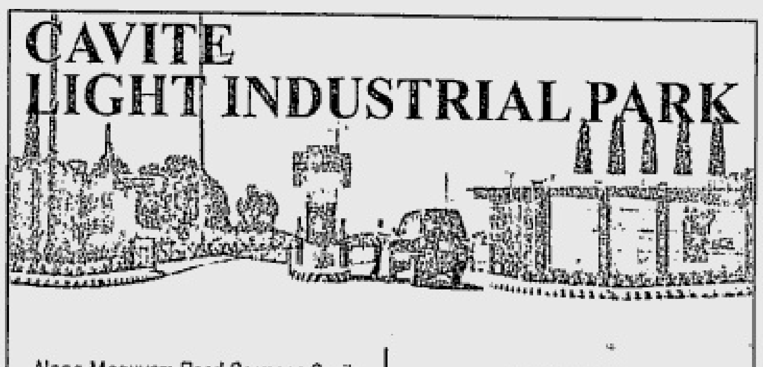

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Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

A love affair with American SUVs

By Charles E. Buban

THEY'RE huge; they pack awesome power; they command respect and yet they do clog our highways and overcrowd parking spaces, but still we love them.

Indeed, this country has gone crazy with sports utility vehicles (SUVs) made by the United States' so-called Big Three automakers, namely General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Co. and Daimler-Chrysler AG.

It's quite baffling how we came to love their SUVs in spite of their price—which is as big as they are—plus the fact that they're certainly not fuel sippers.

Perhaps, Filipino motorists prefer the comfort and amenities they provide plus the status they bestow more than anything else.

Bigger is better

Ever since Ford Motors Philippines introduced the Expedition in 1998, Filipinos steadily shifted their obsession toward the much bulkier American-manufactured SUVs.

And despite our not-so-American stature, we have learned and loved to fit ourselves in to these behemoths.

So it's no surprise that the rest of the Big Three's representatives here soon followed with GM Philippines' introduction of its Chevrolet (Chevy) Tahoe and Norkis Automotive Resources Corp. its Dodge Durango.

BIG Three's presence here in the Philippines are represented by these three biggies: (from left) Ford Expedition, Dodge Durango and Chevrolet Tahoe.

Consider their vital statistics: Being full-sized SUV, Ford Expedition tops the chart at (length x width x height) 5.22 meters x 1.99 meters x 1.97 meters. Chevy Tahoe comes in close at 5.0 meters x 2.0 meters x 1.93 meters.

As for Dodge Durango, being a mid-sized SUV makes it the petite of the three at 4.91 meters x 1.81 meters x 1.82 meters.

Status symbol

"Apart from the distinct safety and comfort they provide, American SUVs have become one of the most visible status symbols here," shares Porti Vencer, NARC national marketing manager.

Indeed owning one doesn't come cheap as one Dodge Durango—the least expensive among the three—is already priced at P1.85 million.

Chevy Tahoe comes in close at P1.92 million while a Ford Expedition costs P2.08 million.

Although their dimensions can readily tell them apart from the rest, it is what they have under the hood that clearly set them apart from other SUV wannabes.

Monstrous V8 engine

Chevy Tahoe, Dodge Durango and Ford Expedition are all powered by a monstrous V8 engine but that does not mean they all perform the same.

Chevy Tahoe's Vortec 4.8L V8 engine tops engine power as it offers 275 horsepower and 290 pound-feet of torque capable of towing 6,700 lb (that's more than 3,000 kg!).

Although the smallest among the three, Dodge Durango comes close in engine performance with its Next Generation 4.7L Magnum V8 engine that can generate 235 horsepower.

Enormous pulling power

But with an enormous pulling power of 295 lb-ft of torque, the Dodge Durango is even stronger, capabl e of towing up to 7,550 lb (almost 3,500 kg) of extra baggage.

Ford Expedition's 4.6L Triton V8 engine appears the modest of the three with its powerplant generating 232hp and a maximum torque of 395Nm.

"Perhaps, engine power is what attracts SUV buyers to choose American SUVs. With power to do more, Filipino owners have more options with their SUVs," says Vencer.

No matter where you look, the American SUVs have loads of power and luxury features that make even the unsympathetic fall in love with them.

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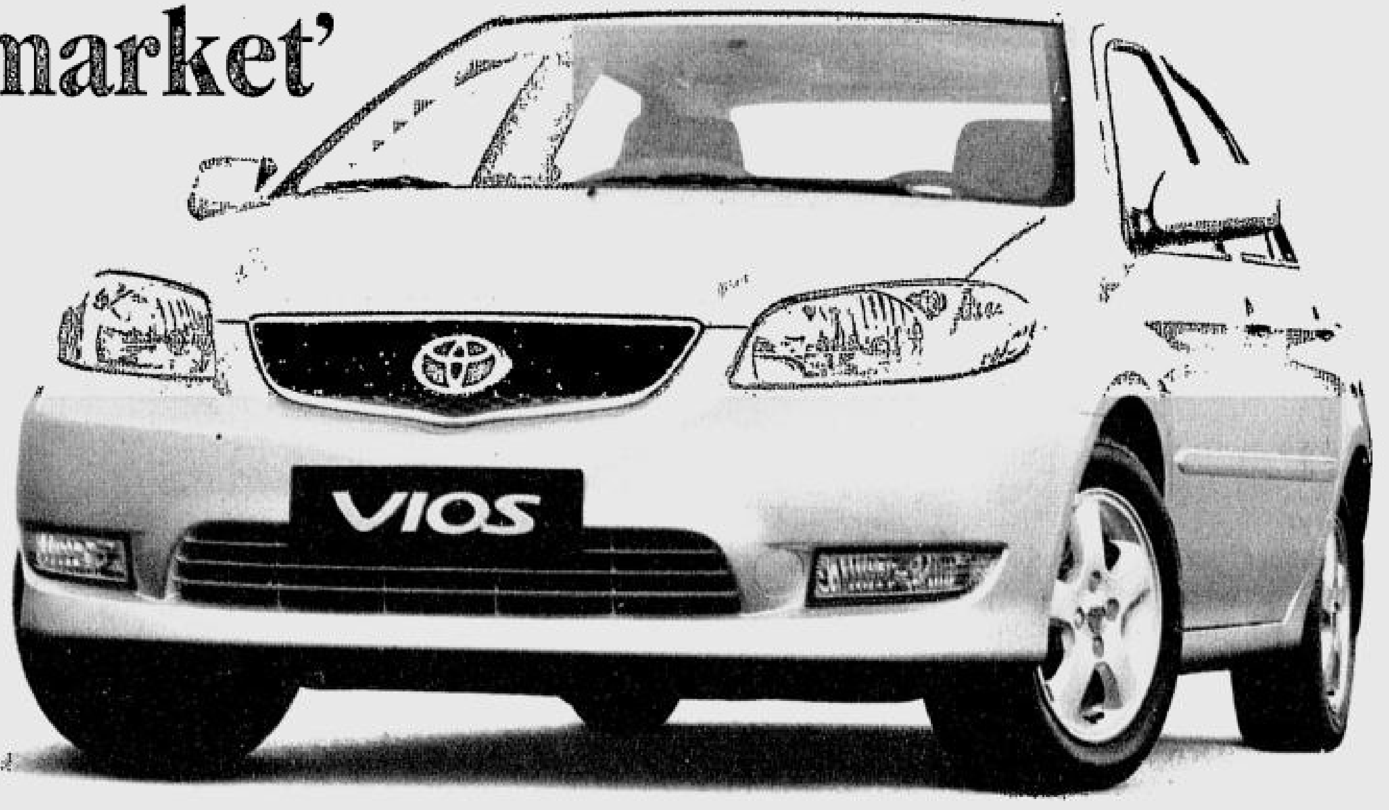
Can the 'Britney market' put Vios on top of the City?



By Tessa R. Salazar

TODAY'S rivalry between Vios and City reminds the motoring industry of 1998 when Toyota's Echo and Honda's City had their own head-to-head duel.

The Echo was introduced not as a full sedan but a radical stylized mini hatchback, and despite its credential as the European Car of the Year and the Japan Car of the Year, and compared to the City's more conventional sedan look then, the Echo lost the battle. The bane for the Echo (in the Philippine market, peculiarly) seemed to be its too futuristic look, and Toyota learned its lesson. Toyota next rolled out an Asian car, a four-door sedan that looked more like a sedan. Thus, the Vios was born.

And Britney Spears liked it.

Honda—which has never been known as overly eccentric in its designs—experimented this time, tinkering with the looks, and then came out with the new City. The high rear, "nose-dive" look and the styling of the side mirrors made it look unconventional, its makers hoping the tech-savvy college students would gravitate toward it.

Never mind that at the back of its designers' minds the City in the Philippines could have been a gorgeous hatchback, and some observers say about three-fourths of the way, the City was about to become one here, but then the trunk was added—the result of which was a very spacious trunk of 500 liters.

But away with the "what ifs." The City is here, and so is the Vios, and the countdown continues. As of June to July, Vios buyers numbered 717 and the City buyers at 863.

In tune with this age

This writer had the opportunity to drive a silver steel 1.5G A/T Vios a few weeks after driving the top-of-the-line City 1.3S with SRS and airbag. At first glance, the Vios' exterior styling looked more "in tune" with this day and age, while the City's looked futuristic. Observers noted the City's design needed a longer period before judgment could be passed on it, and it could make or break Honda's design of its future cars.

If displacement were the talking point, then the Vios has the last say. Not only does it offer 1.3-liter variant (5-speed manual transmission), but 1.5s as well (4-speed A/T and 5-speed M/T). Its top variant, the 1.5-liter 1NZ-FE twin cam, 16-valve, four in-line cylinders engine enhanced with the variable valve timing-intelligent (VVT-I) technology generates 107 horsepower at 6,000 rpm.

In terms of coefficient of drag, the Vios performs an impressive 0.30. Its 4-speed AT weighs in at 960 kg (compare that to the big body Corolla's 1.2 tons).

The Vios' drive is "torquey" as one expert observed. The handling was adequate, especially during sharp curves.

Both engines now feature plastic manifolds that reduce the engine heat. Also the engines of both Vios and City have been inverted, characteristic of race cars, wherein the air intake is situated up front to catch cooler air. One effect of that is more power is generated, as cooler air results in better combustion in the air-fuel mix. Another effect is that everything is within easy reach when it comes to engine maintenance procedures.

VIOS
everything

BRITNEY endorsing Vios

The batteries for both the Vios and the City are noticeably small, to save space and weight, perhaps.

The Vios' engine bay, noticeably, is not painted, which drove our experts to ask: Why so? Unfinished or unpainted engine bays are harder to clean when oil splatters on them.

'Battle of the Interior'

The Vios' interior is not as classy as that of the City. The City's upscale interior gives you the impression that you've just entered a luxury car. Honda went the extra mile for the interior. Which isn't saying Vios scrimped on the interior. You just get your money's worth for the Vios' interior, no more, no less.

One of the more peculiar details we found bothersome in the Vios is its vanity mirror, which is at the driver's side and not one on the front passenger's side. Should we blame Britney for this?

For the males in our group, the Vios' gray interior was more "homey" than the stately beige of the City. "I'm too afraid to touch the City's interior as I could dirty it up," quipped one. Well, wash your hands before driving the City, *hombre*.

The digitized center gauges of the Vios are a marvel to look at, but take a bit of getting used to. The 3-D looking instrumentations (Vacuum Fluorescent Display) are considered novelties first-time drivers would like. But for those who've been used to seeing their readings directly below their own side of the windshield, they're quite confusing.

The Vios' horn sounds too meek for its size. In the United States and Europe, this horn would've sounded just fine. In the Philippines, however, a louder sounding horn is needed.

Put the Vios on reverse, and you'll hear a loud beeping sound you'd mistake for a back sensor. But it's no sensor. The sound is just a safety aspect that warns, perhaps neophyte drivers, that they're on reverse, and nothing more.

The Vios, even with its top-of-the-line variant, has no airbag. The City, however, has one. The Vios' trunk capacity is 400 liters, while the City's can fit in 100 liters more, and the rear seat can even be folded.

Entry-level tires

We expected a bit more sporty tires from both cars, considering their markets and designs. The Vios' and the City's tires are sized 175/65R14H. Fifteen-inch tires for the Vios would've been perfect. If you just want them to run, the tires are good enough.

This writer had a lengthy chat with the guys from Toyota Car Club Philippines Ed Romero, Eisele Buntua, Francis Samonte and prexy Art Avenir. And what do you expect? They said they had the time of their lives toying the Vios 1.5L AT around during the public test drive. Other automotive technologists present like Rufi Parpan, Angel Pangilinan and Raymond Reyes said they had their own moments with the Vios and the City.

The City, they say, has eight spark plugs while the Vios has only four. Each plug cost about P80. The plugs should be changed once or twice a year. For economy buyers, they would have to buy eight spark plugs to get the most power out of the 1.3L City.

Verdicts: Overall, the Vios looks more attractive for the car of today compared to the City, which is bordering on the radical. Vios is Euro-styled (complete with the antenna at the back). If you're more particular with the interior, then the City is for you. If you want a sporty 7-speed CVT, then get the City. If you're more for power and sedan in looks, then get the Vios. If you love Britney and would do anything for her, get both. The Vios is for "everything" and the City is for "and then some."

Improper construction of U-Turn slots

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

THE PRACTICE of building U-Turn slots in the metropolis is now being bastardized.

Its intention is good: Ease traffic.

But it has its limitations, though. While it can be effective in some areas, it is not so in other places.

* * *

The scheme was successful on Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, because of one thing: Commonwealth is as wide as the waistline of Dabiana.

The U-Turn slots at Commonwealth are perfectly placed because the wide avenue allows for vehicles not using the U-Turn slots to use several other lanes to avoid said U-Turn slots.

Thus, when vehicles queue for their turn to use the U-Turn slots, other vehicles have the latitude to veer from them because of the wideness of Commonwealth Avenue.

* * *

That is not so in other areas in the metropolis. Of particular interest is Quezon Boulevard/Quezon Avenue, particularly those found between Delta/Circle and Rotunda near España.

The road is a little narrow that the "piercing" of the island to give way to U-Turn slots is more of a boon than a bane. The intention is currently backfiring, its desired result not being mercifully achieved.

There is chaos there, what with all the tangled traffic occurring every day of the week since it was implemented.

* * *

The correct approach there was to first widen Quezon Boulevard. If you will notice, that whole width of the boulevard is not being harnessed. Only half of it is being used for vehicular traffic; practically the entire other half is being used as parking space of establishments.

I don't know why the government has not utilized that big stretch of government property. If there's money to build U-Turn slots at Quezon Boulevard, why not a budget to start expansion of that road?

As things happen there every day, there are more vehicles using the U-Turn slots than vehicles traveling straight. What's contributing to the monstrous traffic there is the nonclosure of Araneta Avenue that crosses Quezon Boulevard. For a U-Turn slot to be effective, allow a free flow of traffic on the road where it is located.

* * *

I'm saddened by the news that an entire family on board a van was almost wiped out recently when the van was hit by a wayward Philippine Rabbit bus at the Northern Luzon Expressway. What a terrible accident!

Is there no end in sight to such ghastly news there?

At first, I didn't mind it when people say the North Diversion Road has become a haven of inefficiency. But now, it does not surprise me anymore if people keep saying that road has become the Northern Luzon Deathway? I still vividly remember: I was the first to point out the foolishness of putting up a traffic light in an Expressway, such as that one at Dau.

Only in the Philippines.

* * *

At first, the overpass at Quezon Avenue-Edsa was a boon to the public and to motorists. Not anymore.

At the foot of the overpass going south, at the corner of Mother Ignacia Street, there is a waiting shed for commuters/passengers. And yet, a spitting distance away is a sign: "No Stopping Anytime."

That is a virtual death trap.

* * *

Motorists crossing Quezon Avenue from Edsa and motorists turning left from Quezon Avenue going to Edsa are literally blocked by southbound buses whose drivers almost always stop to pick up passengers from that waiting shed.

A traffic jam happens there all the time, inconveniencing both motorists and commuters. The danger is when a motorist driving fast after turning left from Quezon Avenue gets hit by an onrushing bus from atop the overpass. It could be fatal.

Paging Bayani Fernando. Please remove that pink waiting shed. That is not only a death trap, that is also a spot where several law enforcers engage in their illegal activities.

* * *

QUOTE ME. BF means Bayani Fernando but BF can also mean Best Friend. That is, if BF can ensure that his men enforce traffic signs to the hilt. As things stand, the "No Unloading/Loading" sign has been the No. 1 source of corruption among traffic enforcers for decades now.

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Euro car paint tech

CAR refinishes shift to high gloss as the country's top car shops bring in European car paint technology. In the south end of Metro Manila, Precision Spray at San Pedro, Laguna, has a name for this European technology. This car paint shop that specializes on high end of the car paints market has a name for its work: glass finish. Precision Spray carries Holland's DeBeer Car Refinishes, which the management of Precison Spray describes as "more than tops in looks, it's real European quality." Precision Spray is one of three service lines of Ray Junia Cars and Services Inc. It operates two workshops in San Pedro, specializing in car repaint.

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Nissan X-Trail. . .

From page C3

pact beams, remote keyless entry with panic alarm button and engine immobilizer are standard on all X-Trail models, ditto roof rails. Body-colored polyurethane front fenders that absorb impact when bumped and snap back into original form without cracking, are another neat feature not found in other SUVs.

For me, the most attractive exterior feature of the X-Trail are its three-dimensional headlights with small blue lamps on top. The aerodynamic body design reduces wind noise at high speed and is macho-stylish enough. Given the X-Trail's superlative features and advanced 4x4 equipment, small wonder it has become a best-seller even at pre-new-excise-tax prices of P1.495 million for the 2.5 liter model and 1.333 million for the 2.0-liter 4x4. A 2.0-liter 4x2 model is also available for 1.199 million.

Nissan X-Trail raises the bar for SUVs

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

IF you are looking at gasoline-fed 4x4 sport utility vehicles and find the BMW X5 too expensive, the Nissan Patrol too massive, the Toyota RAV4 not roomy enough, the Suzuki Jimny tiny, the Ford Escape underpowered and the Subaru Forester too close to the ground, then the Nissan X-Trail should fit your bill of particulars. (Note: the Ford Expedition and Honda CR-V are 4x2 vehicles, while the Mitsubishi Pajero and Isuzu Trooper are diesels.)

Neither too big nor too small, the X-Trail raises the bar for compact SUVs with the most powerful engine in its class, its All-Mode electronically controlled four-wheel-drive (4WD) system and its intelligently designed, extremely practical and spacious interior. Not to mention its car-like handling, ride comfort and low levels of NVH (noise, vibration, harshness.)

The top-of-the-line X-Trail is powered by Nissan's new QR series engine, a 2.5-liter, 4-cylinder, 16-valve DOHC with Continuous Variable Valve Timing Control capable of 180 psi/6,000 rpm max horsepower and 245 Nm/4,000 rpm max torque. "Am I driving an SUV?" was my reaction the first time I took the wheel of an X-Trail, so amazed was I by its responsive acceleration, handling, quietness and stability when cornering.

Performance

Maybe the fact that the X-Trail was built on the platform of the 200-hp Nissan Skyline GTS sports coupé has something to do with its high-performance characteristics. The top speed of the 2.5-liter X-Trail, which is available only with automatic transmission, is 180 kph. With the speed governor switched off, it could probably hit 200 kph. A balancer shaft system accounts for the reduced NVH while body torsion stiffness superior to that of passenger sedans partially accounts for the car-like handling.

The X-Trail's All-Mode Electronic 4x4 system allows the driver, by simply pressing any of three buttons on the dashboard, to choose between 2WD for normal driving conditions, "Lock" for full-time 4WD and the Auto Mode which, via the Electronically Controlled Coupling, monitors engine speed and automatically distributes the required torque to the rear wheels when traction is needed. Auto Mode guarantees stability in all start-up conditions, be it in mud or going up a slippery slope.

Just important as 4WD in an SUV is cabin versatility and cargo capacity. On this score, the X-Trail still wins hands down compared to its core competitors. The X-Trail's cabin is sinfully spacious, all of the seats can be folded flat, the 60/40 split rear seat can be reclined in five positions or its cushions and armrest removed to make room for varying combinations of passengers, sports equipment, luggage and cargo. The seats can also be folded to create a wide, flat space for sleeping at the rear.

Comfort, space

I found the elected driving position very comfortable while providing excellent visibility. The all-leather seats in the 2.5 X-Trail are large, comfy and fully padded, which, together with the rear wheels' angled trajectory and fully independent suspension front and rear, minimize shocks from road obstacles and thus result in less fatigue for passengers, even on long trips. Foot space under the front seats allow rear seat passengers to stretch out even more.

Just as the X-Trail has the biggest engine in the compact SUV class, it also has the biggest cargo space. With the rear seat folded, the X-Trail can carry two mountain bikes, five golf bags or a mid-sized dog cage. What's more, the water-resistant, scratch-resistant cargo floorboard can be conveniently removed for washing.

The X-Trail's ergonomics are unique. This is the only junior SUV with a centrally mounted instrument cluster, two drink cooler boxes, six cupholders (two in front, four for rear passengers), an extra glove box in front of the driver, two 12-volt power points and a roomy multi-layered center console box that also serves as an armrest. The audio system consists of an AM/FM CD cassette player with six speakers and for the 2.5-liter X-Trail, a six disc CD changer.

Safety

Dual front airbags, anti-lock braking system (ABS) with Electronic Brake Force Distribution and Brake Assist, ventilated disc brakes on all four 16-inch wheels, side im-

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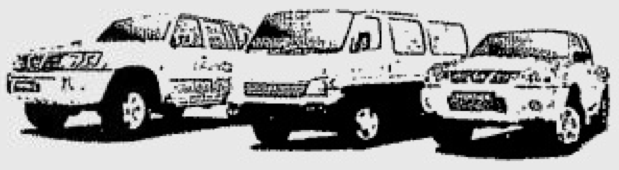

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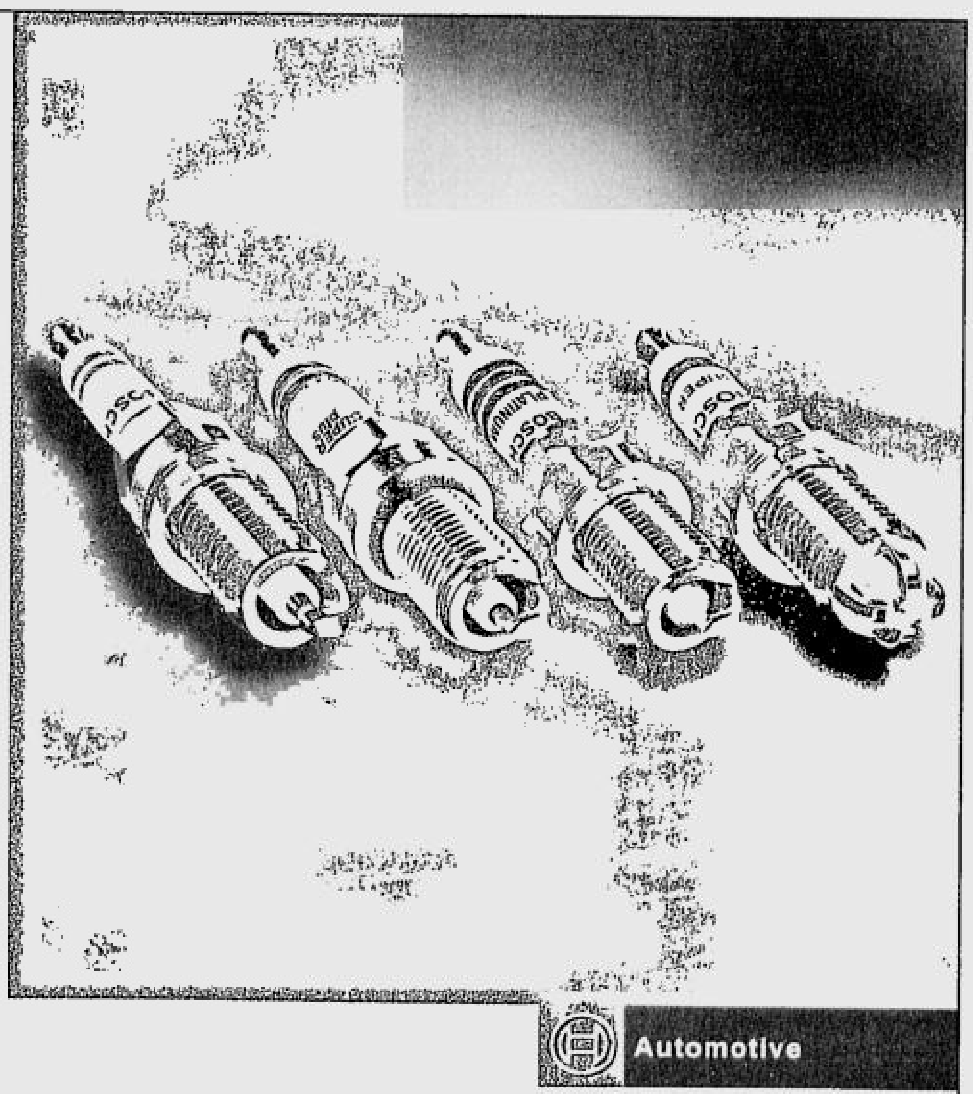

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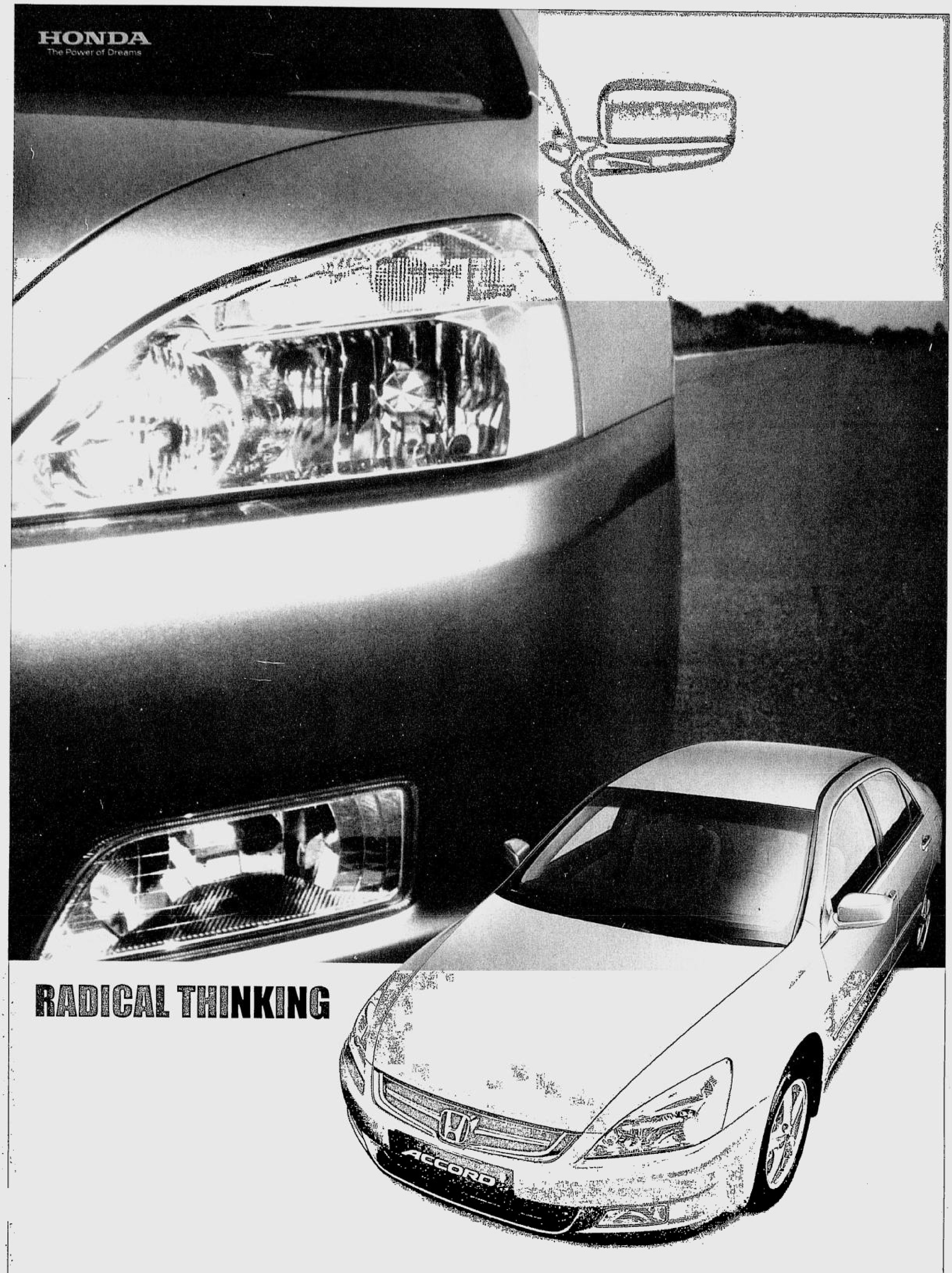

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

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Last call for Doreen Gamboa-Fernandez Food Writing Award entries

THE MANILA Ladies Branch of International Wine and Food Society will receive entries hand-delivered or posted by special delivery up to 5 p.m. tomorrow at Prism, 5th Floor, PDAF Bldg., Sen. Puyat Ave. near the corner of Edsa, Makati.

Anyone may submit an essay about comfort food in English not less than 4,500 characters nor more than 5,000 characters (800 words), two pages, double-spaced on short bond paper.

Use a pen name as byline. Accompany the essay with a separate sealed envelope containing the author's information sheet that includes name, pen name, residential address and telephone number, business address and telephone number, if any, school name, address and course if enrolled, e-mail address, cell phone and fax number. The envelope containing author's information sheet and real identity will be opened only in the presence of judges and after the winners have been determined.

A contestant is allowed up to two entries; each must have a different byline and must be accompanied by an author's information sheet. If you want to be included in the special student category, indicate after the pen name on the essay that you are an elementary, a high school or a university student.

Essays will be scored based on content (50 percent), research (30 percent), style (20 percent). The decision of the board is final and entries become the property of IWFS Manila Ladies Branch. Winners will be announced on Sept. 29.

Prizes include gift certificates from bookstores, publishing houses and restaurants; subscriptions to magazines; publication of winning entries in newspapers and magazines; and an invitation to the awarding ceremony. Winning works will also be published in the IWFS Manila Ladies Branch booklet to be launched in November, and each winner will receive a complimentary copy.

For more information, call Ahyie Torres at 890-9666.

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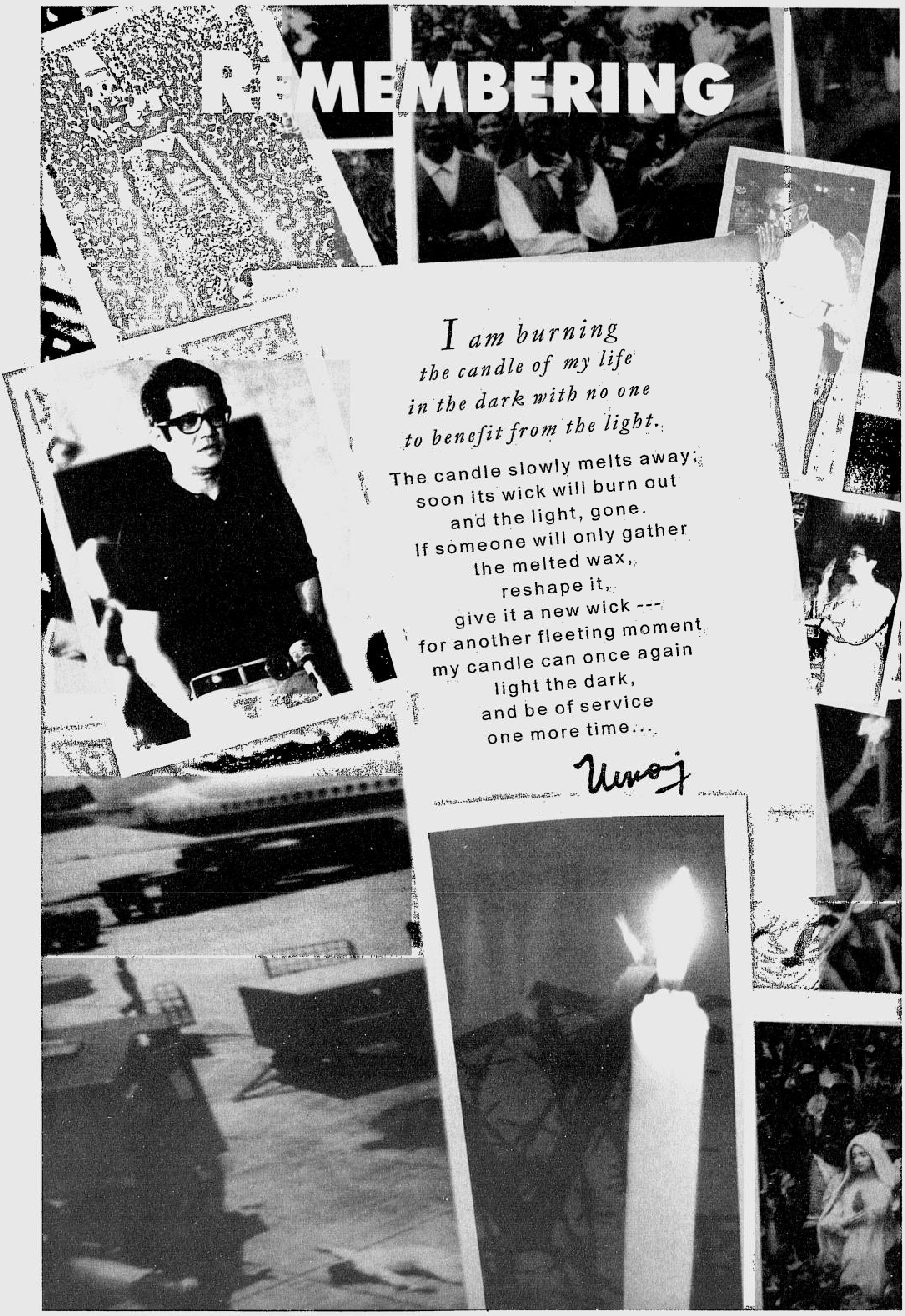

REMEMBERING

I am burning
the candle of my life
in the dark with no one
to benefit from the light.
The candle slowly melts away;
soon its wick will burn out
and the light, gone.
If someone will only gather
the melted wax,
reshape it,
give it a new wick ---
for another fleeting moment
my candle can once again
light the dark,
and be of service
one more time...

Ninoy

1983 *Si Ninoy Aquino ay pinaslang... at sumiklab ang galit ng bayan.*
It was an anger that lit a million and one candles, finally ending the darkness of dictatorship.

People Power was the flame that ended tyranny not by the force of arms, but by the power of a united, awakened people. Not by violence, but with positive action. It echoed what Ninoy always knew in his heart: that things could get better if only we continued to believe in our own strength as individuals and communities.

The flame that was lit 20 years ago continues to be nurtured by values embedded in our culture. They remind us that hope does not only come from the goodness of other people's hearts, but from our own self-reliant and creative hands.

These are the gains borne out of Ninoy's legacy of sacrifice, service, and responsibility.
We commemorate that spirit.

20th
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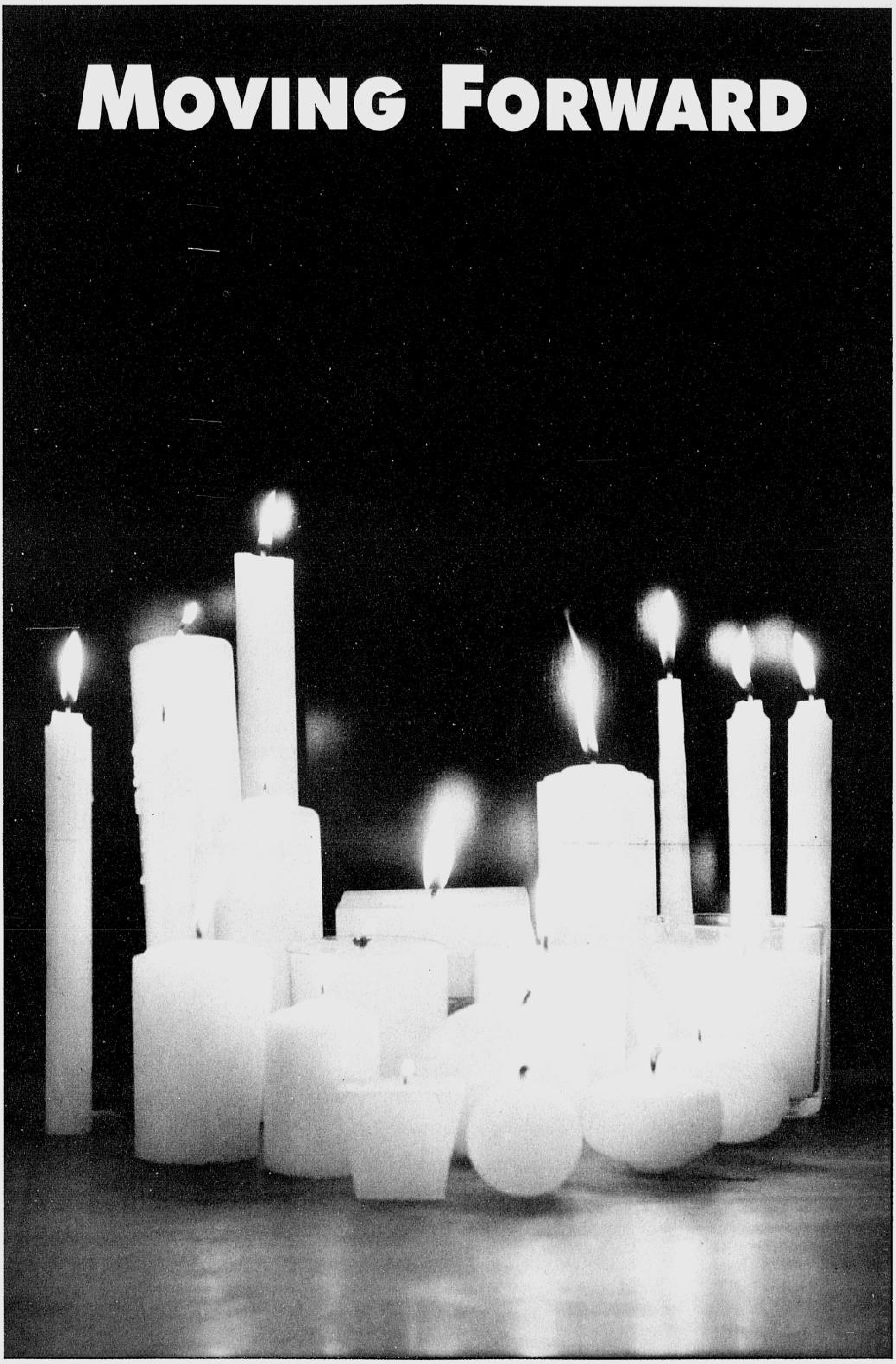
MOVING FORWARD



20 years after its birth with the death of Ninoy Aquino, the spirit of People Power lives on. It lives in the hearts and minds of Filipinos doing extraordinary things. Citizens who have stopped complaining about how bad things are, and instead are taking steps to improve their lot.

These are the People Power People. They remember the glory days, but they also moved forward, living and breathing the values that light the path of heroes: sacrifice, service, responsibility, empowerment, and transformation.

If enough of us emulate their shining example, we can finally realize the dream of building a truly just and prosperous society.

Let us commemorate the 20th year of the Aquino assassination by being a part of the solution. Let us be counted among the People Power People.

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‘I won, I won!’ Really?

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

WHEN, oh, when shall we hear the last of these raffles where, from out of the blue, somebody telephones or sends a text message announcing: “You’ve won!” when you don’t even remember joining one? The last one we wrote about was a convoluted scheme that trapped the naïve wife of a newsman into paying for an overpriced water purifier.

Now, we hear this story from journalist Linda Bolido. It’s the same raffles game with a new twist, this time supposedly using warranty card numbers. A few days after she bought an appliance, she got a call from a man who announced that she had won in a raffle! The man claimed to be with the so-called Philippine Electronics Association that served as a central desk receiving all customer-signed warranty cards for different manufacturers.

Evidently, the association also conducted raffles. “Your warranty card number for a recently purchased appliance won in a computer raffle,” the man informed Bolido. The man rattled off an impressive array of prizes with popular brands—microwave oven, television set, etc.

She was told she could claim her prize by going personally (no representatives) to an appliance center on the second floor of Midland Plaza. The man gave her a pin code which, he said, would be fed into the computer of the appliance center to determine what prize she would get.

Bolido had the good sense to verify her “good fortune” by calling up the service department of JVC, the appliance manufacturer. “The JVC people have not heard of the electronics association, and they vehemently denied that warranty cards were sent anywhere other than to their office,” Bolido said.

The big question is—how indeed do perpetrators of this raffles game get access to the telephone numbers of the appliance buyers and the details of their warranty cards?

Same candy, different prices

Consumer Rina Sibal complained (last week’s column) that the same Nestlé chocolate bars she bought at two stores in SM Megamall had two different prices. Here’s a letter addressed to her from Rosemarie M. Dylim, vice president for operations of International ToyWorld Inc.

“I regret the trouble and inconvenience that the situation has caused you. It is not our intention to deceive our consumers. I have personally attended to your complaint and have advised all our branches to immediately pull out the Nestlé Crunch from the selling area for price alignment with that of SM Supermart.

“Also, I would like to extend my gratitude to concerned consumers like you who quickly call our attention so that we could give better service. Rest assured that such will not happen again in any of our stores.”

Customers with complaints or suggestions can write to Rosemarie M. Dylim at International Toyworld, Inc., SM Corporate Offices, Bldg. B, 100 Bay Boulevard, SM Central Business Park, Bay City, Pasay City. Her telephone number is 834-9511.

More letters

From honeypinklemonade@yahoo.com: “Why is Globe Telecom blocking WAP sites where you can download free ringtones, logos and games? Every time I use my WAP/GPRS to go to those free sites, I get the prompt ‘no server access.’ The GPRS service of Globe is free. Why don’t they just charge for the use of GPRS and stop blocking those sites? There’s no use offering free GPRS services if you cannot go to your preferred sites. It would only be fair if they just charge for the use of the GPRS service and let subscribers surf wherever site they wish to go.”

A PDI reader (vcdbuyer9980@hotmail.com) warns cell phone users about unscrupulous technicians in service centers. Recently, he brought his Nokia 8250 to a repair store in Glorietta to have the earpiece checked.

The technician said it was “busted.” He then replaced the parts and charged P200 for it.

The PDI reader paid but insisted on retrieving the supposedly “busted” part from the technician. He brought it to another shop and, just as he suspected, it worked after a little tightening of a loose part.

Concerned consumer (rhanesa@mydestiny.net) gives this warning: “I decided to try the eat-all-you-can-pasta at Piu Pazzo. My companion ordered something else. While we were eating, a waiter came over and told my friend to try out some pasta. When she said no, the waiter persisted and placed the pasta on my friend’s plate. He said, ‘*Tikman nyo po, masarap ito*, free taste *po*.’ We sampled the pasta. It was as good as the other food. But, when the bill came, we were made to pay P250 for the pasta sample. I tried to argue but the waiter insisted, *dapat daw* no sharing.”

From Cynthia, a concerned mom: “This is about the current Nescafé commercial about dormitory boys rejoicing that there was no class because of the bad weather. Shouting with glee that there is no class because of the rains is teaching the wrong values to school children. It has a negative impact on children. As the leading, household consumer brand, Nescafé should inculcate good values and right conduct.”

John Orford of Balingasag, Misamis Oriental, commented on the complaint of a couple against security guards that frowned on the baby knapsack they insisted on bringing with them. He said the guards had a reason for asking the couple to deposit the bag at the security counter. No offense to the couple, please.

He wrote: “There’s an old one (technique), well-known in England. Habitual shoplifters like to have babies with them, preferably in push-chairs. ‘Don’t wake her, we’ve only just got her to sleep’ is an old line. And if a search looks imminent, a distraction can be arranged, like dropping all the gear on the floor, and even training an older child to be ‘difficult’ at the same time.”

Praises

As we always say, it pleases us to get praises from consumers. Here’s one from Marty Giron of Pleasantville, Cainta: “I had a recent surgical operation at the San Juan Medical Center and would like to praise the competence of the following doctors: Apolinario Esquivel, chair of the surgery department; Ambrosio Dollete, ortho-surgeon; Luis Roy Colendrino, endocrinologist.”

E-mail consumer complaints and comments to mgiron@i-manila.com.pk

Learn the ways of the food business

LEARN the most effective ways of handling any food business. Know the strategies and trade secrets that have made Maya Kitchen graduates successful either in cooking and baking business or catering.

There are unlimited chances open to all aspiring caterers and cooks and bakers to realize their dreams. Here are some of them:

For individuals who love serving people and cooking fine dishes, the Catering Seminar on Aug. 23, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., is highly recommended.

Learn the technical aspects of catering operation from costing, portion control, quantification, last-minute preparation strategies, hygiene, sanitation to food handling and storage. Menu planning and table set-up, actual preparation of dishes like salad, fish and seafood, pork, chicken, beef and dessert will also be part of the course. Lunch will be served for free. Another scheduled course is Bakery and Bakeshop.

Baking I (Basic) on Aug. 27-29, 1:30-5 p.m., caters to those who haven’t had any baking experience. It teaches techniques in preparing basic pie crust, different types of cakes, quick bread, yeast breads and other baking related topics.

Baking I (Basic) is a certificate course with hands-on exercises for adults that requires pre-registration.

Visit Maya Kitchen (Tuesday to Saturday) at the 8/F, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Avenue, (Pasay Road), Makati City. Call 892-1185/5011 local 108 or e-mail mayakitchen@pacific.net.ph.

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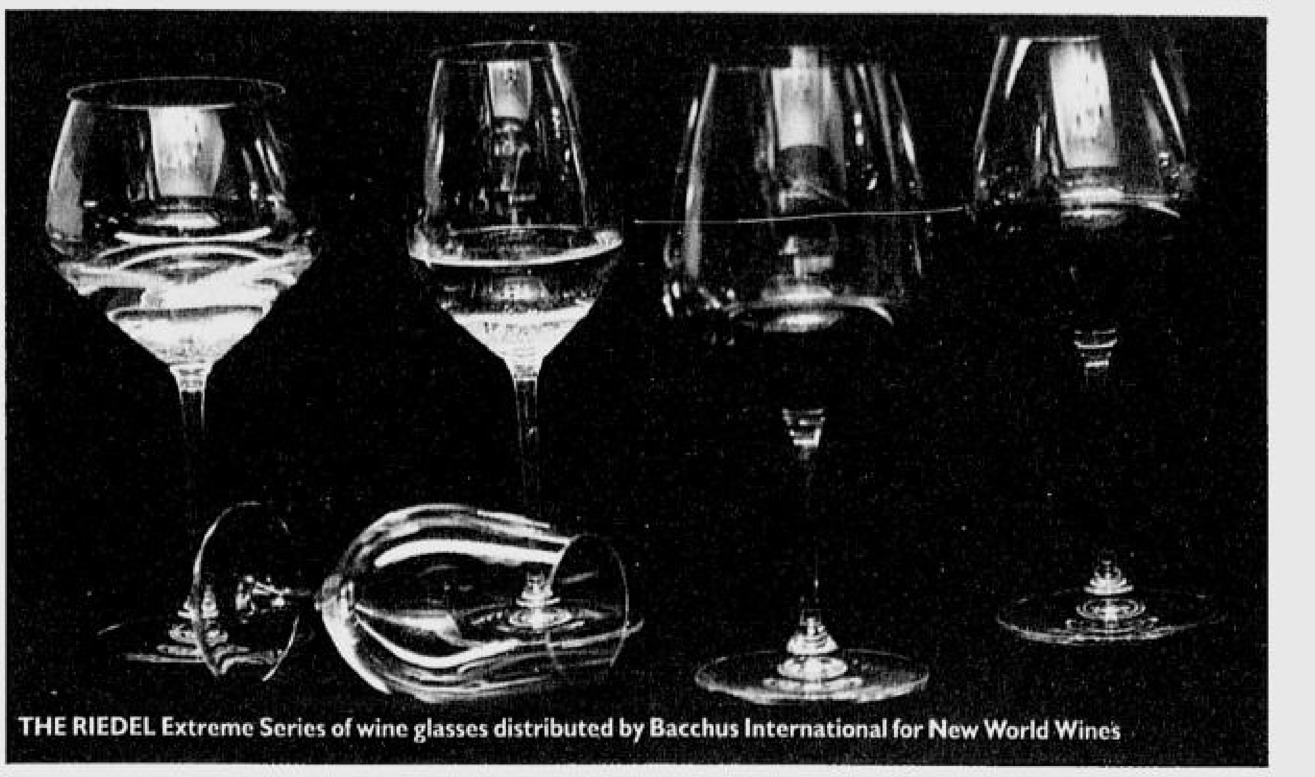
THE PACIFIC WHARF

The glass that's wine's best friend

By Felice Prudente Sta. Maria


THE RIEDEL Extreme Series of wine glasses distributed by Bacchus International for New World Wines

THE SHAPE of a glass can enhance or hide the exquisite aromas and flavors of the most highly prized and priced premier wine. It can also make an inexpensive beauty come out of the closet.

That's what Riedel (pronounced to rhyme with "needle"), the 300-year-old Austrian crystal-making company, announced to the gourmet world 30 years ago. Today connoisseurs continue to be amazed as Riedel proves that the shape of a glass is responsible for the balance and harmony of a wine's flavors.

PINOT Noir Extreme Riedel Glass with Australia's Scotchman Hill Pinot Noir Wines

Dining with Riedel

"The content commands the shape," explained Mark Baulderstone, Riedel's regional head for Asia.

Baulderstone was in Manila for a dinner tendered by Bacchus International, Inc. and prepared by Mandarin Oriental Hotel at its Tivoli Grill. The Sydney-based specialist set each place setting with four wine glasses to make up the Riedel Extreme Tasting Set.

Glass 2 was only for Chardonnay, like the Round Hill 2000 served with the second course, a confit of Norwegian salmon on spinach with beetroot ravioli and vanilla-saffron sauce. Glass 3 was for Sauvignon Blanc, like the J. Bouchon 2002 paired with the first course, a crab-avocado cocktail set in chilled gazpacho.

Glass A, reserved for Scotchman's Hill Pinot Noir 2001, partnered with the main course: Parma ham wrapped lamb cutlet served on fried lamb potato hash with olive-eggplant caviar and feta cheese. Glass B was for Cabernet Sauvignon, the night's choice, being a La Joya Gran Reserva 1999, to accompany whipped brie de meaux served with baby mache lettuce and onion-fig marmalade as a singular cheese course before the serving of coffee and white chocolate parfait accompanied by nougatine mousse in walnut tuile and strawberries plumped in Cointreau.

Game of the glasses

Alex Lichaytoo, president of Bacchus and Riedel representative in Manila, chose comparatively affordable young vintages from Australia, Chile and USA (Napa Valley). Not because during experiments wines are poured well enough to reckon aromas, sipped then just thrown away, but because he wanted to show how glass selection is crucial to making even regular table wines taste better than one can imagine.

Every guest also had Glass 1, called the Joker. It is a typical bowl on a stem most people use.

Riedel's glasses are obviously different: their bowls vary in width, height, and contours. The size of a glass' opening affects how one smells a wine's bouquet and how rapidly alcohol evaporates.

"The shape is also responsible for the flow of the wine and, consequently, where it touches the tongue's taste zones," Baulderstone said. "It is generally held that the tip of the tongue is where one tastes sweetness. The backmost part of the tongue is where one senses bitterness. The left and right outer edges are where one senses saltiness. Running parallel to the salt lines are two other linear areas where one

THE GLASS/ E3

Riedel's world-famous crystal ware brings out the balance and harmony of wine's flavors

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- Shredded Fishlip Soup
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- Roasted Duck
- Steamed Crabs
- Yang Chow Fried Rice
- Butchi
- Mango Sago

Before: P 8,000 P5,200
Good for 6 Persons P 2,700

- Suckling Pig Cold Cuts
- Steamed Prawns with Garlic
- Double Luck S. Fin Soup
- Sliced Local Abalone with BK Mushroom
- Peking Duck 2 Ways
- Steamed Lapu Lapu
- Minced Duck with Lettuce
- Steamed Crab
- Yang Chow Fried Rice
- Butchi
- Mango Sago

Before: P 11,000 P7,380
Good for 6 Persons P 3,790

Set Menu for 5
GOOD for LUNCH only
- Peking Duck 2 Ways (½)
- Fish Lip Soup
- Baked Prawns
- Steamed Lapu-Lapu
- Abalone Mushroom w/ Bamboo Fungus
- Minced Duck w/ Lettuce
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- Garlic Fried Rice
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1 Whole Peking Duck
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THU	LIVE CRABS Fried w/ Salt & Pepper or Steamed Before P 900/kl NOW P500/kl
FRI	BIG PRAWNS Baked w/ superior sauce or Steamed w/ Garlic (min of 4 pcs) Before P 120/pc NOW P60/pc
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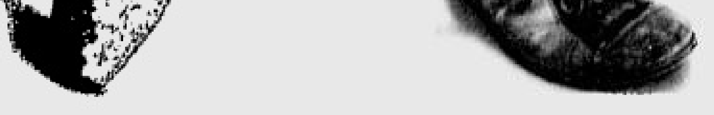

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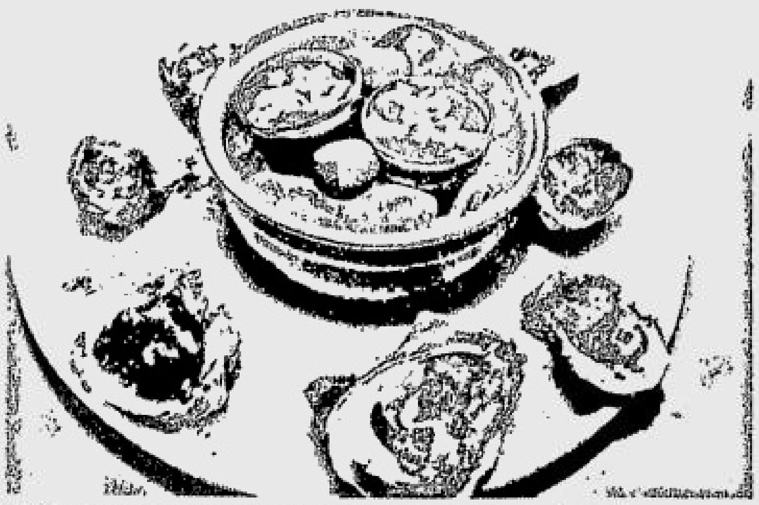
Bowl by the hour in a lane and play as many games as you can.

Promo runs from August 15 - October 15, 2003. See posters for details.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2173, Series of 2003

GRILLED salmon steak


GRILLED oysters and shooters with Bloody Mary mix and onions

TENACIOUS tendons

A wild, wild West kitchen

At W, the steaks are 'Batangus,' not Angus, and they are served with pride and special gravy

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Johnny Villena

WITH FILIPINO families eating out more than ever—and choosing meat more often—W The Big Grill cannot be blamed for joining the sizzling steakhouse sector of the restaurant industry.

Located at Glorietta 2 Restaurant Row, Pasay Road, Ayala Center, Makati, the 170-seater W (tels. 752-8482/752-8483) offers steaks that appeal to budget-conscious customers, who expect more out of a steak dinner than they did years ago.

"Steak was once considered a luxury for the Filipino family, and eating out was a rarity," owner Rikki Dee says.

"W delivers by raising the taste bar without raising the price," adds Sonny Dee, Rikki's brother.

Most of W's meat come from Batangas. "This is why we call them 'Batangus.' Our consultant Gene (Gonzalez) knew how to tenderize the meat so it would be good for steak," Rikki says.

At W, steaks are cooked medium rare (with warm red center) and served with W's original gravy; medium well (no pink color and cooked throughout) with mushroom gravy; or well done (cooked throughout, charred outside) with peppercorn or spicy gravy, depending on a diner's preference.

"Most Filipino diners want well-done steaks. But these should be cooked medium rare. For local steaks, the best we can do is medium well, which makes the steak juicier. If we cook them well done, they become tough," Sonny says.

Tasty and tender

At W, a group of four can get tasty, tender steaks without emptying their pockets the way they might at a more expensive casual chain.

Served with soup of the day and two side dishes, Sizzling Steaks Rodeo Fest, offered at a price range of P240-360, features T-Bone Steak, Cowboy Beef Ribs, Tenderloin Steak, Ribeye Steak with Bacon, Salisbury Steak and Country-Style Steak.

There are also Campfire Steaks like Wimpy Steak, Burly Steak, Calf's Liver, Sampler Plate of meat and seafood (P240), and Neptune's Platter of oysters, prawns and tuna, which you can cook yourself right on your table, using an inflammable gel and hot granite stone slab. The items, priced from P150 to P260, are also served with soup of the day and two side dishes.

Steak Specials are cooked with imported choice meat: USDA Porterhouse Steak (P600) and New Zealand Lamb Steak (P350).

Other specialties

"Since we cannot survive with an all-meat menu, we came up with a seafood line," Rikki says. For those who are not on the Atkins diet, its New Frontiers include Seafood Medley in creamy curry sauce (P190), Calamari Steak (P180), Seared Tuna Steak (P180), Grilled Salmon Steak (P190), Seafood Skewer (P180), Grilled Scampi with garlic lemon butter sauce (P190) and Seafood Cioppino (P180). There are also appetizers, salads, sandwiches, desserts and side dishes. Breakfast fare and a kid's menu are also offered.

Urban cowboy

W stands for a modernized wild, wild West, says Rikki, who's a big fan of the defunct TV series. "This is why our menu focuses on steaks, barbecues and Southern food," he says.

Chef Gene Gonzalez and son Gino worked with Rikki and Sonny for 45 days in conceptualizing and polishing W's menu.

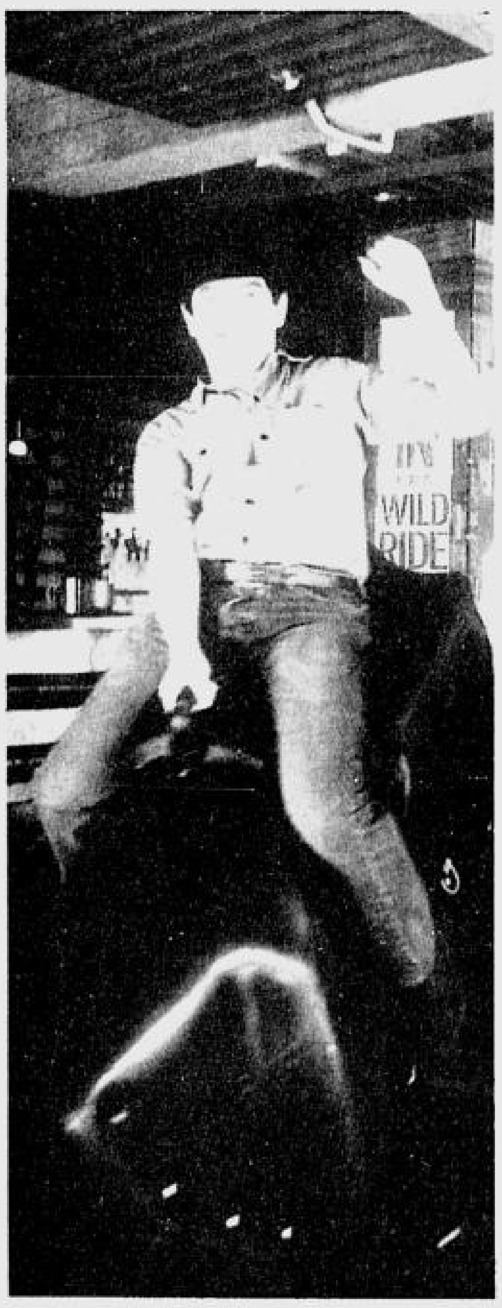
Designed by architects Alex Ong and Gerry Ramirez, W is a casual dining room that is family-oriented and tourist-friendly. The spacious restaurant features rustic decor with antique-looking furniture and a mechanical bull at the ground floor. The design of function rooms at the second floor takes one back in time to the early 1900s. A framed guide on how to help someone who's choked adds an interesting touch.

On Saturday nights, the "Flow" event is held with male models like Jon Herrera and Robbie Mananquil featured as DJs. The restaurant will also showcase the Viva Hot Babes as they ride W's mechanical bull on the third or fourth week of September.

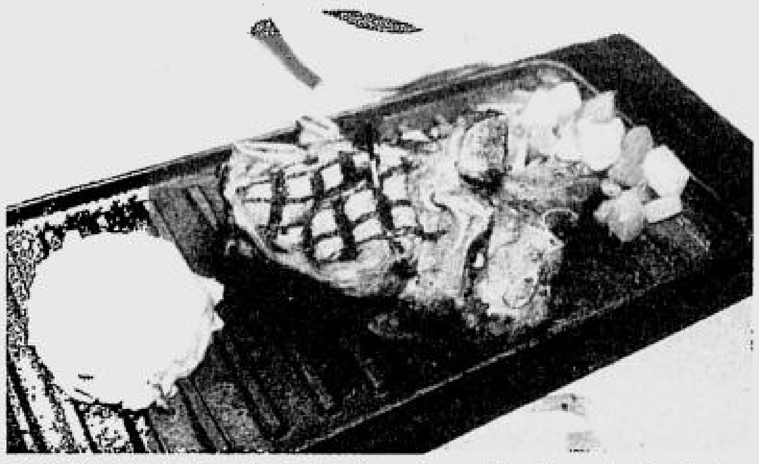
W is open daily, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.-midnight; Sundays, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

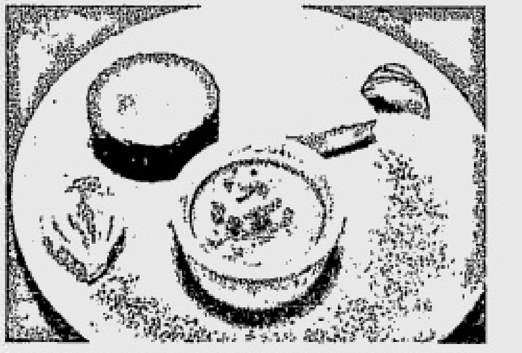
E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

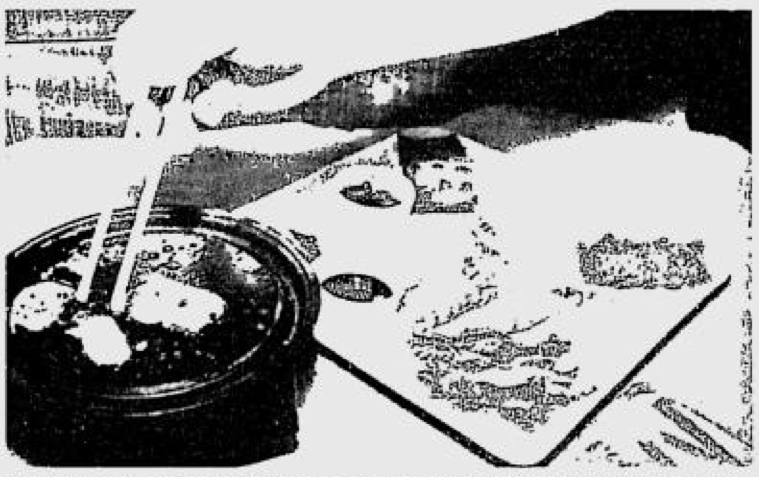
WILD BBQ baby back ribs and pork BBQ with grilled corn and garlic mashed potato

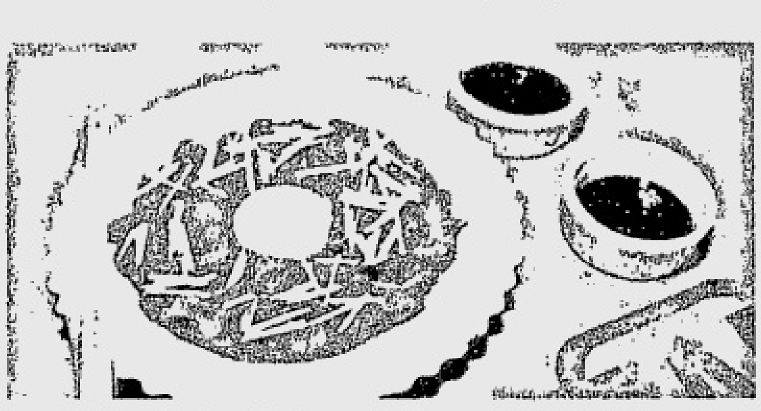


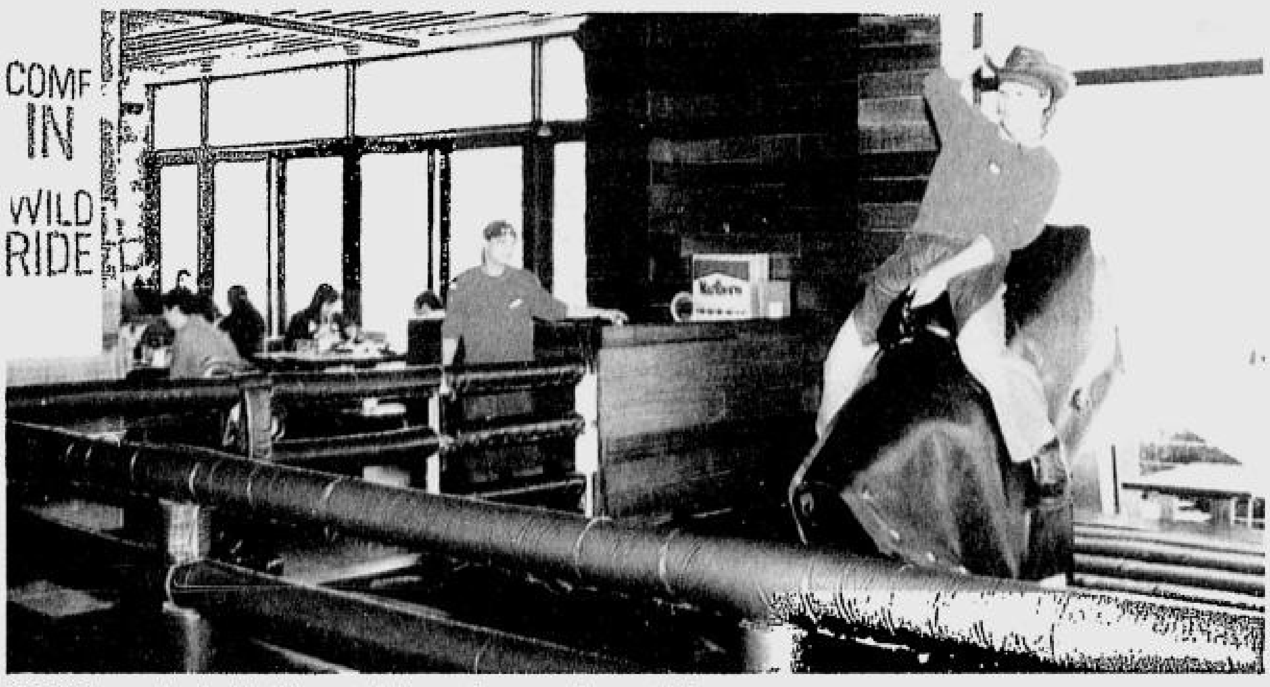
SONNY Dee, brother and business partner of Rikki Dee, enjoys a wild ride at W.


T-BONE Steak with grilled mixed veggies and garlic mashed potato

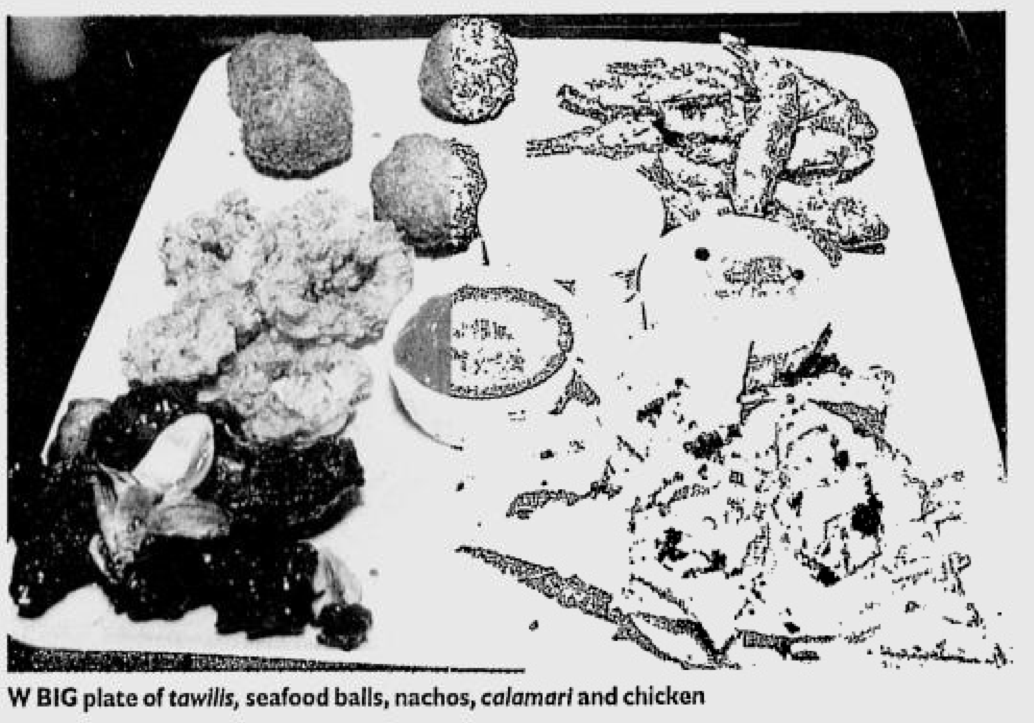

DESSERT trio of Chocolate Mud Pie, Oreo Cheesecake and *dalandan* Creme Bruleé


CAMPFIRE Steaks' Sampler Plate of meat, oyster, prawns and tuna


BEEFY n' raw, beef sashimi served with egg



RIDING a mechanical bull is part of the cowboy experience at W.


W BIG plate of *tawilis*, seafood balls, nachos, *calamari* and chicken

Most important meal of the day

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria
Contributor

WHENEVER I plan a breakfast menu, I always take into consideration the amount of time available to prepare the meal.

When in a hurry, I just have the simplest meal consisting of cereal and milk, toasted bread, butter and jam and perhaps a can or bottle of sardines for protein and calcium. When I have more time, I prepare "hotcakes" or waffles and pair them with pan grilled bacon or Spam.

On weekends when breakfast can be pushed back to brunch, I prepare something more elaborate, such as garlic rice with fried eggs and *tocino* or *longganisa* enjoyed with a cup of hot, thick cocoa or an espresso.

We must have breakfast no matter how hectic our schedules are. It is the first and most important meal and sets the tone of each day. Here are easy breakfast recipes to start your day right.

No Preservative Chicken Tocino

½ kg chicken thigh fillet
½ c brown sugar
salt and pepper to taste
½ c pineapple juice
2 tbsp banana catsup

Using a meat mallet, pound chicken meat to flatten it. In a mixing bowl, combine brown sugar, salt, pepper, pineapple juice and banana catsup. Marinate the chicken in the mixture overnight in the refrigerator.

Pan grill or pan fry with very little oil. Ideal for breakfast or *baon*.

Simplified Chinese Asado

½ kg pork *kasim*
¼ c dark brown sugar
1 tbsp well-pounded garlic
2 tbsp rice wine
2 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp bottled Char Siu Sauce or Hoisin Sauce
2 tbsp dark corn syrup

Remove the skin of the pork. Slice into 3 or 4 portions, 2 inches wide. Transfer the pork to a mixing bowl and pour the brown sugar. Massage the sugar into the meat until the sugar has dissolved completely. Pour the rest of the ingredients and mix well. Let stand for 1 hour.

Arrange the pork strips in one layer on the rack of a turbo broiler. Set the temperature at 300°F and bake for 30 minutes or until done. Brush with the marinade from time to time.

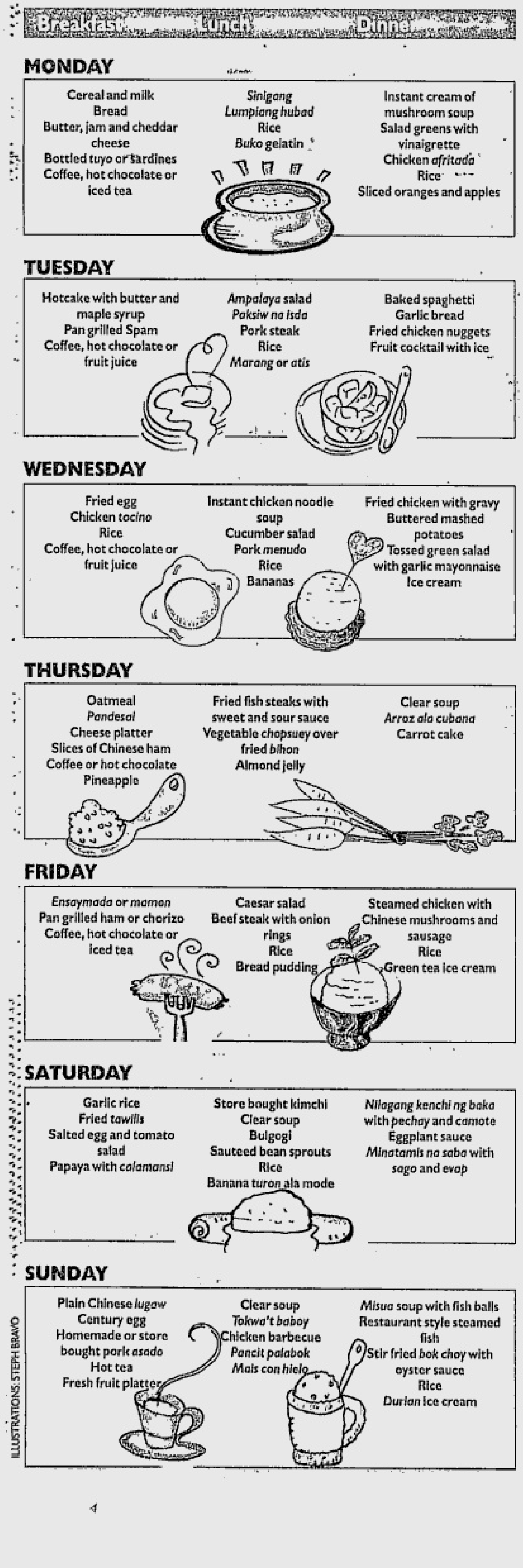
As an alternative, arrange the pork strips on a cake rack set over a jelly roll pan. Using a conventional oven, set at 350°F and bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Baste with the marinade from time to time. Increase the oven temperature to 400°F and bake for 10 minutes more to improve overall color.

Plain Chinese Lugaw

1/3 c raw rice
6 c water
1 chicken broth cube
chopped spring onions

Combine ingredients in a stockpot or large saucepan. Place over high heat and allow to boil. Simmer until done, stirring from time to time. Ladle into bowls and top with chopped spring onions.

Dorothy MJ Ferreria offers cooking, baking and cake decorating lessons at Dorothy's Cooking School in Quezon City. Call 7217735.



	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
MONDAY	Cereal and milk Bread Butter, jam and cheddar cheese Bottled *tuyo* or sardines Coffee, hot chocolate or iced tea	*Sinigang* *Lumpiang hubad* Rice *Buko* gelatin	Instant cream of mushroom soup Salad greens with vinaigrette Chicken *afritada* Rice Sliced oranges and apples
TUESDAY	Hotcake with butter and maple syrup Pan grilled Spam Coffee, hot chocolate or fruit juice	*Ampalaya* salad *Paksiw na isda* Pork steak Rice *Marang* or *atis*	Baked spaghetti Garlic bread Fried chicken nuggets Fruit cocktail with ice
WEDNESDAY	Fried egg Chicken *tocino* Rice Coffee, hot chocolate or fruit juice	Instant chicken noodle soup Cucumber salad Pork *menudo* Rice Bananas	Fried chicken with gravy Buttered mashed potatoes Tossed green salad with garlic mayonnaise Ice cream
THURSDAY	Oatmeal *Pandesal* Cheese platter Slices of Chinese ham Coffee or hot chocolate Pineapple	Fried fish steaks with sweet and sour sauce Vegetable *chopsuey* over fried *bihon* Almond jelly	Clear soup *Arroz ala cubana* Carrot cake
FRIDAY	*Ensaymada* or *mamon* Pan grilled ham or chorizo Coffee, hot chocolate or iced tea	Caesar salad Beef steak with onion rings Rice Bread pudding	Steamed chicken with Chinese mushrooms and sausage Rice Green tea ice cream
SATURDAY	Garlic rice Fried *tawilis* Salted egg and tomato salad Papaya with *calamansi*	Store bought kimchi Clear soup Bulgogi Sauteed bean sprouts Rice Banana *turon* ala mode	*Nilagang kenchi ng baka* with *pechay* and *camote* Eggplant sauce *Minatamis na saba* with *sago* and *evap*
SUNDAY	Plain Chinese *lugaw* Century egg Homemade or store bought pork *asado* Hot tea Fresh fruit platter	Clear soup *Tokwa't baboy* Chicken barbecue *Pancit palabok* *Mais con hielo*	*Misua* soup with fish balls Restaurant style steamed fish Stir fried *bok choy* with oyster sauce Rice *Durian* ice cream

ILLUSTRATIONS: STEPH BRAVO

The glass that's wine's best friend

From page E1

tastes acid. The triangular center of the tongue actually tastes nothing."

"The initial point of contact [between wine and tongue] depends on the shape and volume of the glass, the diameter of the rim, and its finish (whether it is cut and polished or rolled edge) as well as the crystal's thickness," he added.

"As you put the wine to your lips, your taste buds are on alert. Once the tongue is in contact with the wine, three messages are transmitted at the same time: temperature, texture and taste."

One tastes first the fruit, then the acidity, and finally the mineral components, tannin and alcohol.

"Actually you taste with your nose first," explained Baulderstone. "Try drinking coffee while pinching your nose to keep away aroma. The pleasure of the brew disappears. The same will happen to anything we eat that can be smelled."

As guests readied to taste the first wine, he added, "The combination of the senses of smell and taste leads into the wonderful world of flavor. Just take a short sniff of the Sauvignon Blanc, a really short sniff. It holds promise, doesn't it?"

Indeed, the pale golden wine brought forth recollections of lemony fruit with hints of pineapple and citrus.

"Now put your nose to the glass and inhale the promise," he said. Everyone did so obediently.

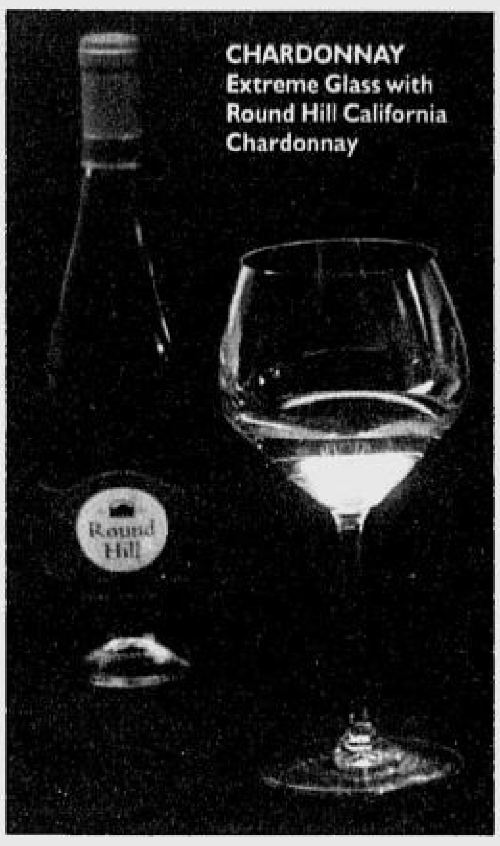
"Finally, sip."

Of course it was lovely wine as promised by the bouquet. "Okay, now pour all your Sauvignon Blanc into the Joker," Baulderstone instructed.

The white wine suddenly looked unappealing. It smelled bad. And it tasted bad. "It can't be the same wine," someone remarked. But everyone knew it was.

"Pour it all into Glass 2 designed for Chardonnay," Baulderstone then commanded, obviously sure of the results after eight years of introducing the stunning glassware line.

The consensus: "Not good. Better in Glass 3."



CHARDONNAY
Extreme Glass with Round Hill California Chardonnay

J. BOUCHON
Sauvignon Blanc white enjoyed with a Riedel Extreme Sauv. Blanc Glass

Similar tastings were done with all the evening's wines.

"Amazing, the man's right," came the reactions. "What will we do with all the Jokers at home?" almost everyone asked, prompting one mother to say, "Use it only for the teenagers and their cheap wine."

"Give it to people you hate," said another. "And what about the heirloom cut crystal sets we have?" "Don't ever use them when you have a good wine and connoisseurs for company," said her husband.

Elegance, lightness and balance

All Riedel stemware are 24-percent lead crystal. The revolutionary Sommelier Series of 10 shapes for Old World wines that was the first to shock cellar masters is fully handmade.

As wineries outside Europe began maturing and improving their products, Riedel designed the dishwasher safe Extreme Series with diamond-shaped bowls to enlarge evaporation surface and thereby enhance the flavors of wines from Australia, New Zealand, California, South America and South Africa.

Riedel also has glasses specific to champagne, vintage champagne, connoisseur cognac, zinfandel and chianti, sautern, ice wine, and rioja, among many others.

"Riedel delivered far better than I expected," said a skeptic. Flushed and grinning from ear to ear as he carried home his Extreme Tasting Set, he expressed everyone's sentiment: "I can't believe it, but Riedel's right, wine glasses matter as much as wines."

Riedel is available at Bacchus, located in all Shangri-La Hotels in the Philippines.

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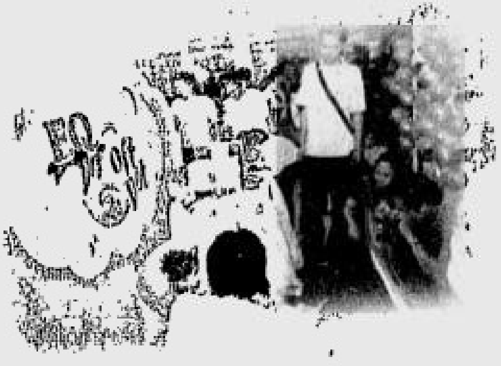
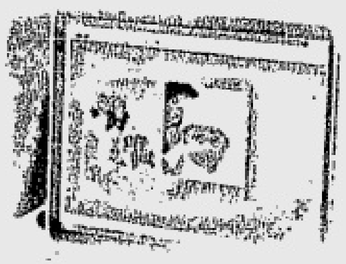
www.lacoste.com

Per DTI-NCR Permit No 3496, Series of 2003.

Eager parents fall in line to experience EQ Dry Soft Spot!





Smile for your Instant **Picture Card**!

EQ Dry Soft Spot

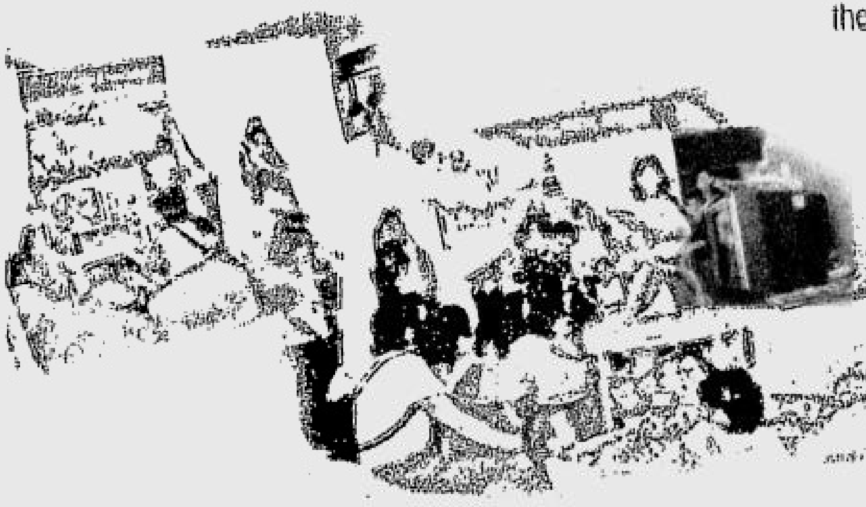
Parents and babies experience the softness of NEW EQ Dry right in their favorite malls!

Last weekend saw the soft opening of the EQ Dry Soft Spot at Robinson's Place Manila – a mall tour created to launch the latest innovation of EQ Dry diapers.

What's new about EQ Dry is the SOFT, CLOTH-LIKE COVER that is gentler and more comfortable on baby's skin. It's the perfect addition to its other wonderful features, such as the super absorbent core and leak guards that ensure baby's comfort even all night long. Unlike most diapers, EQ Dry also has a wetness indicator that tells mom when to change. The wetness indicator helps mom maximize baby's diaper without compromising baby's comfort. And all these innovative features come at a surprisingly affordable price.

As the new EQ Dry is loaded with wonderful features, so is the Soft Spot mall event that treated parents and babies to a relaxing and rewarding time. Check it out and feel the difference of new EQ Dry!

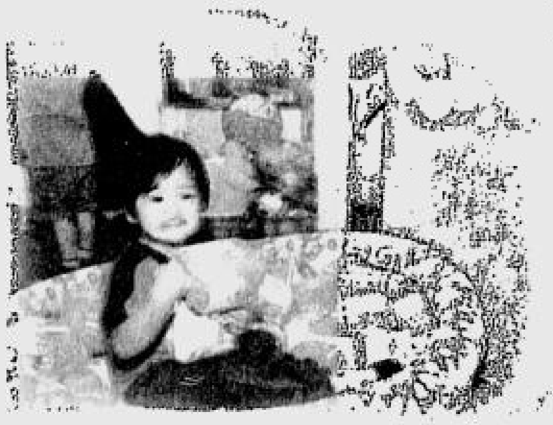
At the very relaxing **Lounge** – where toddlers are treated to their favorite cartoon videos and balloon-twisting.



At the **Free Derma Consultation Booth** – this doctor really has a soft spot for children!

At the **Diaper Changing Area** – where a baby is wrapped in the softness of a FREE EQ Dry diaper, and mommy's embrace.

Moms get to choose from a whole assortment of cool prizes. And all they had to do was present EQ Dry wrappers!



"This is so much fun!"

A toddler playing in a pool of **"Diaper Hakot"** prizes. Yes, he gets to take home all the diaper packs he can carry!

"Let's do it again!"

Watch out for the next EQ Dry Soft Spot mall tour:

• SM Fairview (Aug. 22-24) • SM Bacoor (Aug. 29-31) • SM Megamall (Sept. 5-7) • SM Southmall (Sept. 12-14) • Sta. Lucia Mall (Sept. 19-21) • SM Pampanga (Sept. 26-28) • SM North EDSA (Oct. 3-5) • Bay Citimall Batangas (Oct. 10-12) • SM Iloilo (Oct. 24-26) • Robinsons Bacolod (Nov. 7-9) • SM Cebu (Nov. 21-23)

For more information, log on to www.evei.com.ph

EQ Dry. Di kailangang mahal ang pagmamahal